

# A Tradition of Change

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## CPO INITIATIONS TO CPO 365

By

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NAVHISTVTU0615R





# Author's Note

**T**he history of chief's initiations has generally been passed down by word of mouth. Many articles have been written based on those stories. This paper is an attempt to document, with facts, how chief petty officer initiations have evolved since the end of the Second World War.

Close to seventy-five chief petty officers were interviewed for this paper ranging from those who made chief during WWII to those who made it a couple years ago. I'm thankful for their time and sharing their experiences. Without them, this paper couldn't have been written. Documents from official Navy publications, correspondence, and archives as well as the National Archives were also relied upon for factual information. They were used to confirm and collaborate lore associated with CPO initiations and in some cases, debunk it.

The paper is not intended to condemn or condone initiation practices of the past or present. It was not written to defend the changes and reforms that began when MCPON Del Black issued the first CPO initiation guidance in 1968. However, it is clear that if CPO initiations had not been reformed in the 1980s and 1990s, allowing them to evolve to CPO 365, this paper would have been about a tradition that became extinct a quarter century ago.

CPO initiations are a tradition of change with one constant for all which is the bond we all share regardless of when we made Chief.

**James L. Leuci, ITCM, USN**  
1 April 2015

# Introduction

Initiation, Induction, transition, CPO 365-- there is just no denying the emotional reaction of some Chief Petty Officers (CPO) to changing any aspect of a Sailor's traditional transition to the CPO Mess. Often, these reactions arise from not fully understanding the reason and need for the change. This document is the first ever definitive work detailing the unique history of Sailors' transition to CPO from 1893 to present. Master Chief Jim Leuci has incorporated oral histories, official documents and imagery to bring a proper perspective to this revered event. His work provides a perspective which makes it clear that the CPO Mess has not "lost" anything of real enduring value as a result of change to the transition process. Frankly, his work highlights the increased value that's been added to a process to develop future CPOs mentally and physically preparing them to join the Mess, while instilling a fierce life-long camaraderie.

Many changes occurred before and during my 27 active years in the Mess. What began as a simple celebration of a Sailor becoming a CPO gravitated over the years to what often became a denigrating and excessive exercise to impress upon selectees the "value" of humility. It is still a strongly held belief, by some, that to build "tough" Sailors we must somehow, "break them down", treat them poorly or be disrespectful in order to make them "humble." However, most of the old initiations along with the accompanying excesses were born of two of the best traits still observed in good CPO Messes . . . a demonstrable sense of good humor and the ability to have fun. What began as a simple "wetting down" simply grew from the natural desire of the Mess to outdo what was done the previous year.

The fact that every Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) from Del Black to Mike Stevens felt it necessary to take a round turn of change on the process should not be lost on any CPO. Throughout the years it was often heard, "the MCPON is trying to end CPO initiations." This document should put that falsehood to rest. The facts as laid out by Master Chief Leuci clearly support that the MCPONs were trying to preserve the tradition. Every MCPON knew the CPO tradition of transition would have been forced to an untimely end had they not made the necessary changes to the process they did. The end would have come not because of change, but because of lack of change.

Each year, the Navy invests hundreds of thousands of man-hours in the CPO transition process. Accordingly, the Navy has every right to expect a well-defined and well-developed CPO as a result of such a massive investment. The CPO 365 process produces that well-defined and well-developed CPO not just in some Messes, but across the entire Navy

Anyone who truly understands the CPO Mess knows that ending the process would be devastating to the Navy. Many believe the most important thing the CPO transition process accomplishes is bringing the CPO selectees into the Mess. It does do that very well, but the process also does something much more important. It is what we do at the same time each year, across the entire Navy, when we don "the hat" and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our fellow CPOs. It is when, not uncommonly with a tear in our eye, Chief Petty Officers recommit and rededicate themselves to the ideals of being a Chief. Those ideals, contained in the Chief's Creed, are read at every pinning ceremony every year.

Stop the CPO transition process? I think not. However, the evolution of the process was and will continue to be necessary so that we never lose it. Surely, without this process it could be argued we would not have the CPO Mess of today that's held in the highest esteem by everyone inside and outside our Navy.

**MCPON(SS/SW/AW) Jim Herdt USN(Ret)**  
9th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy  
1998-2000



# Forward

**E**very chief petty officer, active, reserve, and retired should read “A Tradition of Change-CPO Initiations to CPO 365” Study it and review it each year on 16 September when we renew our commitment to the tradition and heritage of the CPO mess worldwide.

Reading “A Tradition of Change” brought back many good memories, a few bad, and tears to my eyes. I have always been very proud to be a member of the U.S. Navy Chief’s Mess—the finest group of men and women in the world. That pride continues to grow as I continue participate in what we now call CPO 365.

Each of my fellow MCPONs and I have brought about necessary changes in order to preserve a Navy tradition that has bonded our mess for over seventy years. These changes were implemented, not to inflate egos or to make change for the sake of change. Change was needed to preserve the tradition from extinction and to serve the Navy with standards that better prepare chief petty officers for their role in today’s Navy. Change is an inevitable tradition; we must accept it smartly or get left behind.

“BZ” to MCPON Mike Stevens for commissioning Master Chief Jim Leuci to research and document CPO initiation history for us and for future generations of chief petty officers. “Let the Buck Stop Here”

**MCPON Duane R. Bushey USN(Ret)**  
7th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy  
1988-1992



BUREAU OF NAVIGATION,  
 Mailed *Nov 26*, 189*4*

U. S. S. *Marion*.

189*4*

To Bureau of Navigation,  
 Navy Department: ✓

I have this day received the  
 DEPARTMENT'S APPOINTMENT  
 for *Jesse J. Everett*  
 as *Yeoman (Equip)*  
 dated *April 1st* —, 189*3*.  
*C. S. C. No 3889.*

Very respectfully,

U. S. Navy.

BUREAU OF NAVIGATION,  
 Mailed *Nov 28*, 189*3*

U. S. S. *Yantic*  
*S. Atlantic Sta<sup>no</sup>*

189*3*

To Bureau of Navigation,  
 Navy Department:

I have this day received the  
 DEPARTMENT'S APPOINTMENT ✓  
 for *John M. Hope*  
 as *Yeoman*  
 dated *April 1 - -*, 189*3*.  
*C. S. C. No 9767.*

Very respectfully,

U. S. Navy.

Leuci Graphic from BuNAV Pressed Letters File 1890s National Archives

Copies of receipts acknowledging the Appointment to Chief Petty Officer that were signed and mailed back to the Bureau of Navigation in Washington, DC. Nearly sixty first class petty officers were appointed to new chief petty officer rates on 1 April, 1893.

# “SWIM CALL” BOOT CPO STYLE

On the day when Edwin G. Sandberg became a chief boatswain's mate, one of his first thoughts was of the Pearl Harbor custom of throwing new chiefs into the nearest swimming pool.

*“No man is going to toss me into any pool,” he asserted. “Very well,” assured his CO, “Your wishes will be respected.”*

That little matter taken care of, Sandberg was ready to go along with any other gag his initiation might include. He fell into line when a party appeared to escort him to the ceremonies, and it just so happened that this was in the general direction of the Pearl Naval Station swimming pool.

It was a happy group of marchers. A drummer beat the cadence and the new chief fell gaily into step with master-at-arms men, his buddies, and five WAVES who joined the procession. Down to poolside the marchers came. Confidently, remembering his skipper's assurance, Sandberg ventured near the water. The male members of the party lagged behind. The next thing he knew, the WAVES had given him the heave ho and the deep six.

No man had tossed him in--but he was all wet anyway.

ALL HANDS September 1960

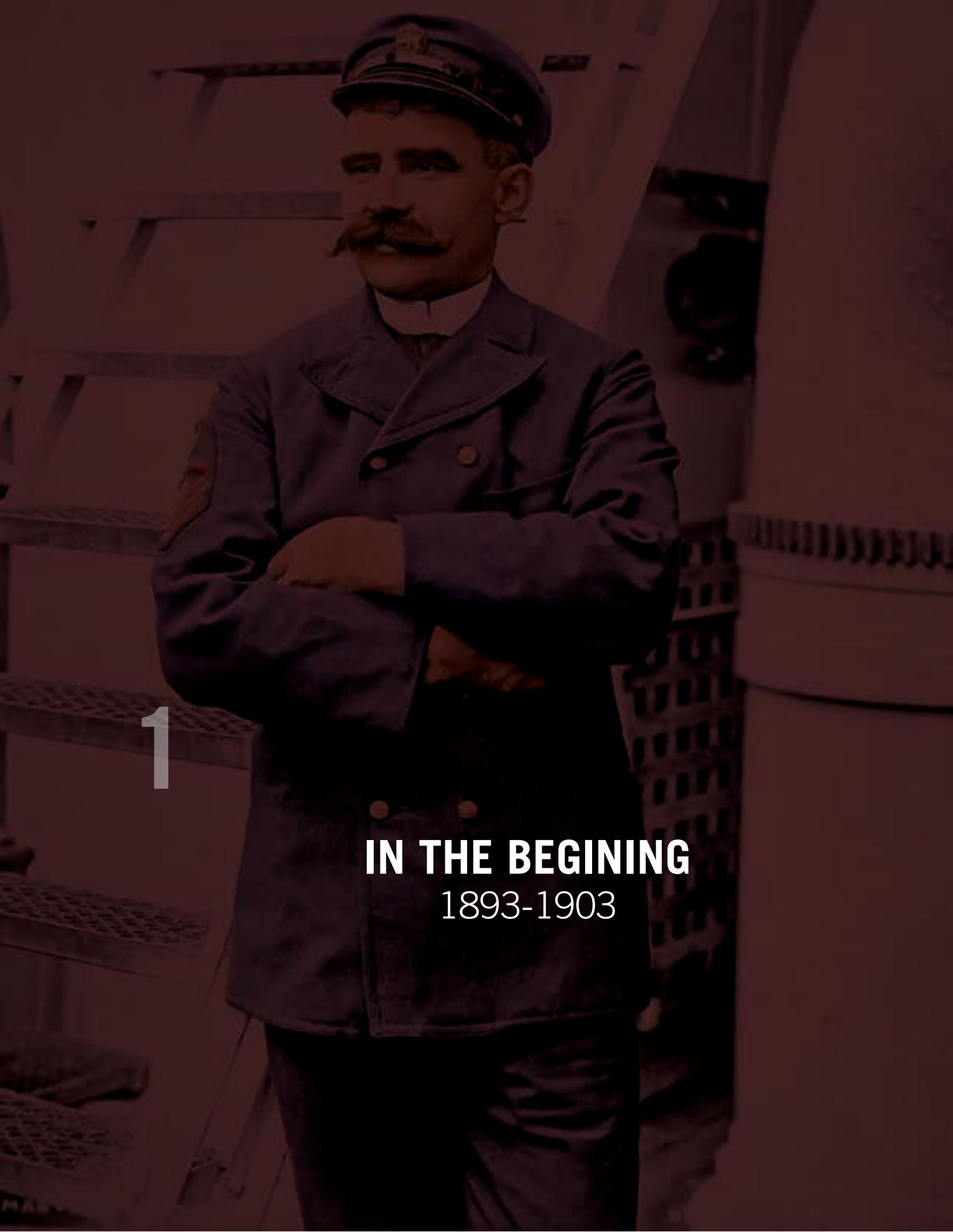


Naval History and Heritage Command photograph

1949 A new chief petty officer is thrown in a pool at Naval Reserve Training Center Chicopee, Mass. as part of his CPO initiation. The main event of early CPO initiations involved throwing new chiefs in a pool or over the side of a ship or submarine.

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A man with a mustache, wearing a dark military uniform and a peaked cap, stands with his arms crossed on the deck of a ship. The background shows the ship's structure, including a ladder and a large cylindrical object. The entire image has a dark, reddish-brown tint.

1

**IN THE BEGINNING**  
1893-1903

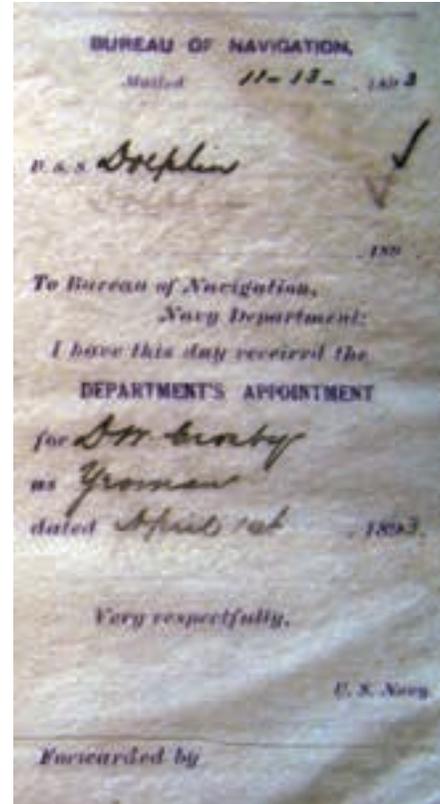
## In the Beginning 1893-1903

The history of Chief Petty Officer (CPO) initiations is primarily an oral history that has been passed down from previous generations of chiefs. Very little has been documented in writing either officially or unofficially. CPO initiations became prominent in the mid-1950s--60 years after the chief petty officer classification had been established in 1893. There is no exact date when CPO initiations began. There is also no documented reason as to why it took 60 years for initiations to begin.

On March 3, 1893, U.S. Navy Circular #1 announced the establishment of the chief petty officer classification effective April 1, 1893<sup>1</sup>. Today, April 1, 1893 is commemorated with celebrations, ceremonies, and khaki balls. However, the appointment of the first chief petty officers was not a major event of the day. The first chief petty officers of 1893 were not immediately elevated to a higher enlisted status as a result of their appointments. In fact, there is no mention of the establishment of the CPO ratings in the Secretary of the Navy's annual reports to the U.S. Congress in 1893 or 1894<sup>2</sup>.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTOGRAPH MODIFIED BY LEUCI  
Chief Petty Officer 1897 ca. USS Nahant.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHED BY LEUCI

April 1, 1893 Chief Petty Officer appointment letters were mailed to the ships of the men promoted. Shown above is the receipt that was mailed back to the Bureau of Navigation indicating the appointment letter for Chief Yeoman D.W. Crosby was received by USS *Dolphin*.

On April 1, 1893 nine ratings were moved up into the chief petty officer classification. Eight of these ratings had previously been first class ratings and the men were already wearing what had become the chief petty officer uniform. Three of the first class petty officer ratings had official titles of Chief Boatswain's Mate, Chief Quartermaster, and Chief Gunner's Mate since 1885<sup>3</sup>. They retained their titles when they became chief petty officers--nothing changed. The other ratings, Apothecary, Yeoman, Machinist, and Bandmaster also retained the same titles they had used as first class petty officers. However, Master-at-Arms became Chief Master-at-Arms.

Of those eight former first class ratings, seven had only to change the rating badges on their uniforms. Chief Master-at-Arms did not have to make any changes since the rating badge they wore as first class petty officers became the style for the new chief petty officer rating badges.

The only rating not previously a first class rating was Carpenter's Mate which had been a second class rating. Therefore, new Chief Carpenter's Mates were required to purchase new uniforms and new rating badges.

After April 1, 1893, chief, first, and second class petty officers shared the same mess<sup>4</sup>. For nearly ten years, chief



LEUCI PHOTOGRAPH

Chief Petty Officer blue cap 1893-1897. The CPO cap device adopted in 1893 was the same device previously worn by first class petty officers from 1885-1893.

petty officers continued to mess and berth with first and second class petty officers. In 1902, a change to 1900 U.S. Navy Regulations formally established a separate mess for chief petty officers. All other enlisted men were consolidated into one general mess <sup>5</sup>.

The first Chief Petty Officer clubs on naval shore installations were chartered after the turn of the century <sup>6</sup>. Chief petty officers were still grouped with all other petty officers. For example, the appointment certificate given to chief petty officers was identical to the appointment certificate given to a seaman who was appointed to petty officer third class--it was titled a "petty officer appointment" certificate. Another example was that gold chevrons were authorized for all qualified petty officers--not just chiefs. The working uniform for all Sailors, including chiefs, was dungarees. When Sailors wore dungarees the only visible difference between chief petty officers and all others was the CPO cap.

In 1903, General Order 134 modified the pay system for chief petty officers <sup>7</sup>. Prior to 1903, Sailors were paid based on their perceived value to the Navy and not according to petty officer class. The pay scales for chief petty officers ranged from \$70 a month for Chief Machinists to \$50 for Chief Boatswain's Mates. However, a Machinist First Class Petty Officer received \$55 a month. Acting appointment chief petty officers were paid the same amount as those serving under a permanent appointment.

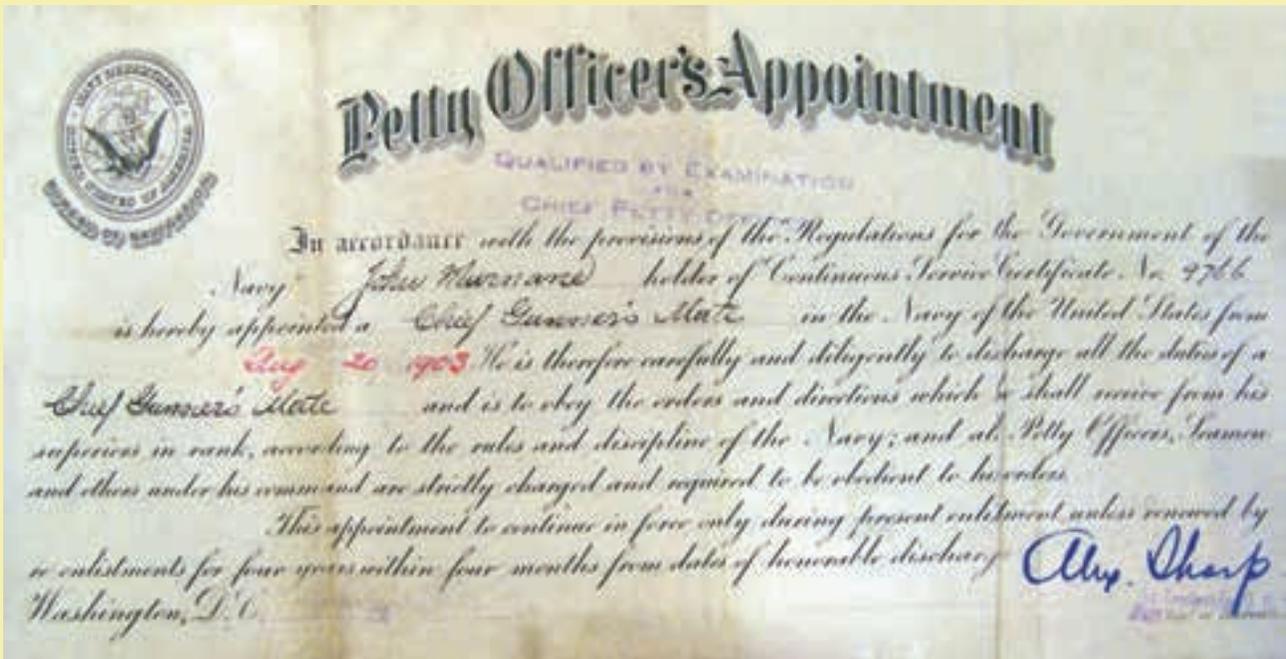
General Order 134 provided that all chief petty officers who received permanent appointments, after July 1,

1903, would receive \$70 a month. Chiefs with acting appointments or permanent appointments issued prior to July 1, 1903 would continue to receive the lower pay, based on their specialty, until they qualified or re-qualified for permanent appointments. The effect of General Order 134 was that chief petty officers finally became the highest paid enlisted men in the Navy.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH

1903 USS *Wisconsin* Battleship #9 Chief Petty Officers. All chiefs with permanent appointments were required to be re-certified in 1903 to qualify for higher pay of \$70 per month. Prior to 1903, pay was based on rating specialty and varied between CPO ratings. After 1903, all CPOs with permanent appointments received the same pay regardless of rating.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND ARTIFACT PHOTOGRAPHED BY LEUCI

Petty Officer Appointment Certificate for Chief Gunner's Mate John Murname dated August 20, 1903. Chief petty officers with permanent appointments were required to be recertified in 1903 in order to draw \$70 in pay each month. Those who didn't recertify continued to draw their pay at a lower rate.

# CHIEF PETTY OFFICER RATING BADGES AND CAP DEVICES

1893-1897



Chief Petty Officer cap device authorized 1893-1897 for wear on blue caps. The same device was authorized for wear by first class petty officers from 1886-1893.



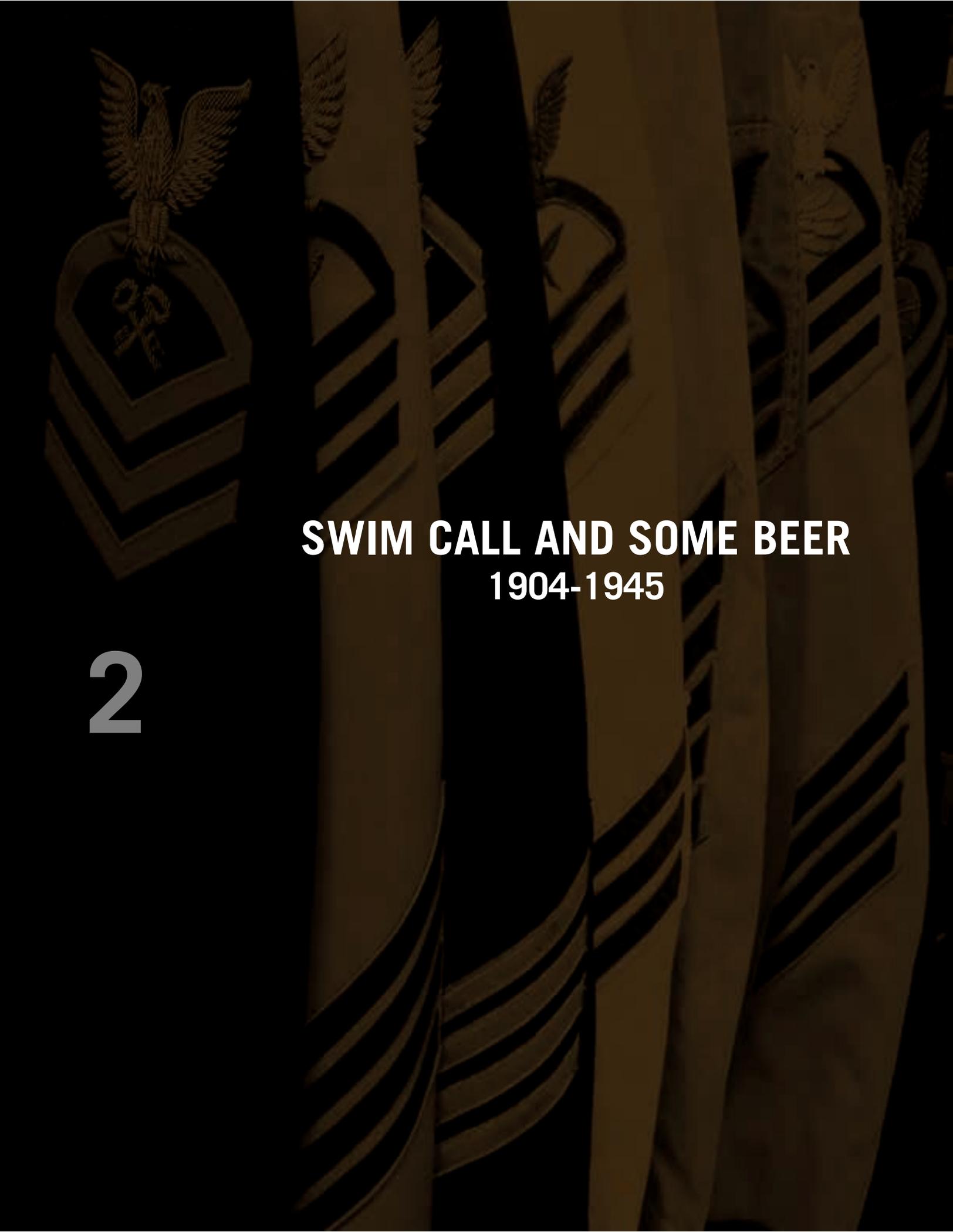
Chief Petty Officer rating badge style adopted in 1894.



Chief Petty Officer rating badge style worn during 1893-1894. The same style rating badge was worn by Master-at-Arms from 1886-1893 .



Chief Petty Officer cap device authorized in 1897. The device was only worn on blue caps until 1913.



**SWIM CALL AND SOME BEER**  
**1904-1945**

**2**



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH colorized by ITCM Leuci  
 USS Oregon Chief Petty Officers ca 1902-1905.

When World War I ended most, if not all, of the original 1893 chief petty officers had left or retired from the Navy. The new generation of chiefs had no memories of co-existing with subordinate petty officers. The chief petty officer mess and quarters were firmly established at sea and ashore. Chief petty officers were the highest paid enlisted men in the Navy. The status of chief petty officers had also been elevated. CPOs enjoyed privileges such as open-gangway liberty, not being required to stand personnel inspections prior to going on liberty, and had better accommodations while traveling on official business<sup>8</sup>. CPOs also had better living quarters and better food than the rest of the enlisted crew.

Chief petty officers' status continued to improve during the years between world wars. In 1929, chief aviation pilots were authorized to wear the same aviation summer khaki working uniform as naval aviator officers<sup>9</sup>. In 1930, chief petty officers were required to wear rating badges with the eagle and specialty mark made from silver bullion thread on their dress blue uniforms<sup>10</sup>. Bullion rating badges were not authorized for men below chief petty officer.

The distinction between chief petty officers and all other enlisted men continued to grow. By 1941, all chief petty officers and officers were authorized to wear khaki working uniforms<sup>11</sup>. However, dungarees still remained part of the CPO seabag.



Our Navy Magazine cover May-June 1940 Issue



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH

Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate, Navy Aviation Pilot (NAP). Prior to WWII, NAP was a designation and not a rating.



LEUCI Collection

Chief Boatswain's Mate gold bullion rating badge. Beginning in 1930, Chief petty officers were required to wear silver bullion rating badges.

Prior to World War II, chief petty officers were serving as Chief of the Boat on submarines and as the leading chief on surface ships. On some battleships the leading chief petty officer lived in a stateroom <sup>12</sup>.

A cash clothing allowance for chief petty officers was first authorized by Executive Order 9226, dated August 19, 1942. Chief petty officers of the Navy and chief petty officers of the Naval Reserve, upon first reporting for active duty, were entitled to a cash clothing allowance of \$300 providing such enlistment or reporting for active duty occurred on or after June 1, 1942. Enlisted men (except band members) upon advancement in rating to chief petty officer on or after June 1, 1942 were entitled to a cash clothing allowance of \$250 <sup>13</sup>.

Albert Dempster joined the Navy in January 1940 for six years. After bootcamp and Yeoman school he volunteered for submarine duty. Upon completion of submarine school he was assigned to a post-World War I era "S boat"--USS S-43. S-43 was home ported in Coco Solo, Canal Zone.

Dempster remained in the Canal Zone until 1943 when he was assigned to USS *Crevalle* SS-291 as a Yeoman First Class. Dempster made four war patrols on *Crevalle*. He and another first class petty officer were advanced to chief during a war patrol in 1943. There was no CPO initiation while they were underway in the South China Sea. When *Crevalle* returned to Fremantle, Australia the two new chiefs were initiated. Their initiation consisted of being thrown over the side of the boat followed by drinking at a local bar. Dempster remained in the Navy after the war and retired as a Chief Yeoman in 1960.<sup>14</sup>

During World War II, thousands of chief petty officers received temporary appointments to the officer ranks. In 1945, as the Navy began to downsize, many of these officers reverted to their former CPO status. In order to eliminate the expense of buying a different dress blue coat, Navy uniform regulations were changed on August 17, 1945. The change modified the style of the CPO dress blue coat making it identical, except for the insignia, to the officer dress blue coat. The size of the buttons was



NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTOGRAPH

Shipmates of John O. Tibs toss him overboard from USS *Bream* (SS 243) at Pearl Harbor on the occasion of his promotion to Chief Machinist's Mate during World War II. This form of CPO initiation was often followed up by a few beers ashore.

increased to officer size (35-line) and the number of buttons was reduced from eight to six<sup>15</sup>. The old style CPO dress blue coats were authorized to be worn until October 15, 1948.

Navy Uniform Regulations 1947 modified the CPO cap making it similar to the naval officer cap by adding a mount for the cap device<sup>16</sup>.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTOGRAPH

1945 Chief Machinist's Mate John O Tibs last moment as a first class petty officer.



LEUCI Collection

Pre-1948 CPO cap with device pinned to the cover. A cap device mount was added in 1947.



*National Archives Photograph*

New Chief Storekeeper G.E. McArdlo, on board USS *Gambier Bay* (CVE 73), eats his first meal in the CPO mess from a trough on February 1, 1944.



*National Archives Photograph*

1944 Chief Yeoman (CY) Rhodell Angel was one of the first four WAVES selected for chief petty officer during in the spring of 1944. Note the "male size" rating badge.

The first Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) advanced to the rate of Chief Petty Officer were appointed in the spring of 1944--three Chief Yeoman (CY) and one Chief Storekeeper (CSK). CY Rhodell Angel, CY Vera Maxine Pearson, CY Marion T. Longhurst and CSK Francis D. Hanusik worked their way through the rates of petty officer third class to chief petty officer. They advanced in the same manner as men by passing written examinations after being recommended for advancement by their commanding officers.

# Crossing the Equator

## USS *Wasp* CV-8

January 1942

Many of the three million Sailors serving during World War II crossed the equator. Chief petty officer initiations of the post-WWII era took on many of the characteristics of Crossing the Equator (Line) ceremonies. Many of the future CPO initiation props such as coffins and stocks were first seen at sea during “crossing the line” ceremonies. Other attributes such as costumes and foul tasting liquids (“truth serum”) eventually showed up in CPO initiations.



Ice-filled coffins became common in CPO initiations 30 years later.



1942 USS *WASP* Crossing the Line Ceremony arrival of the royal party.



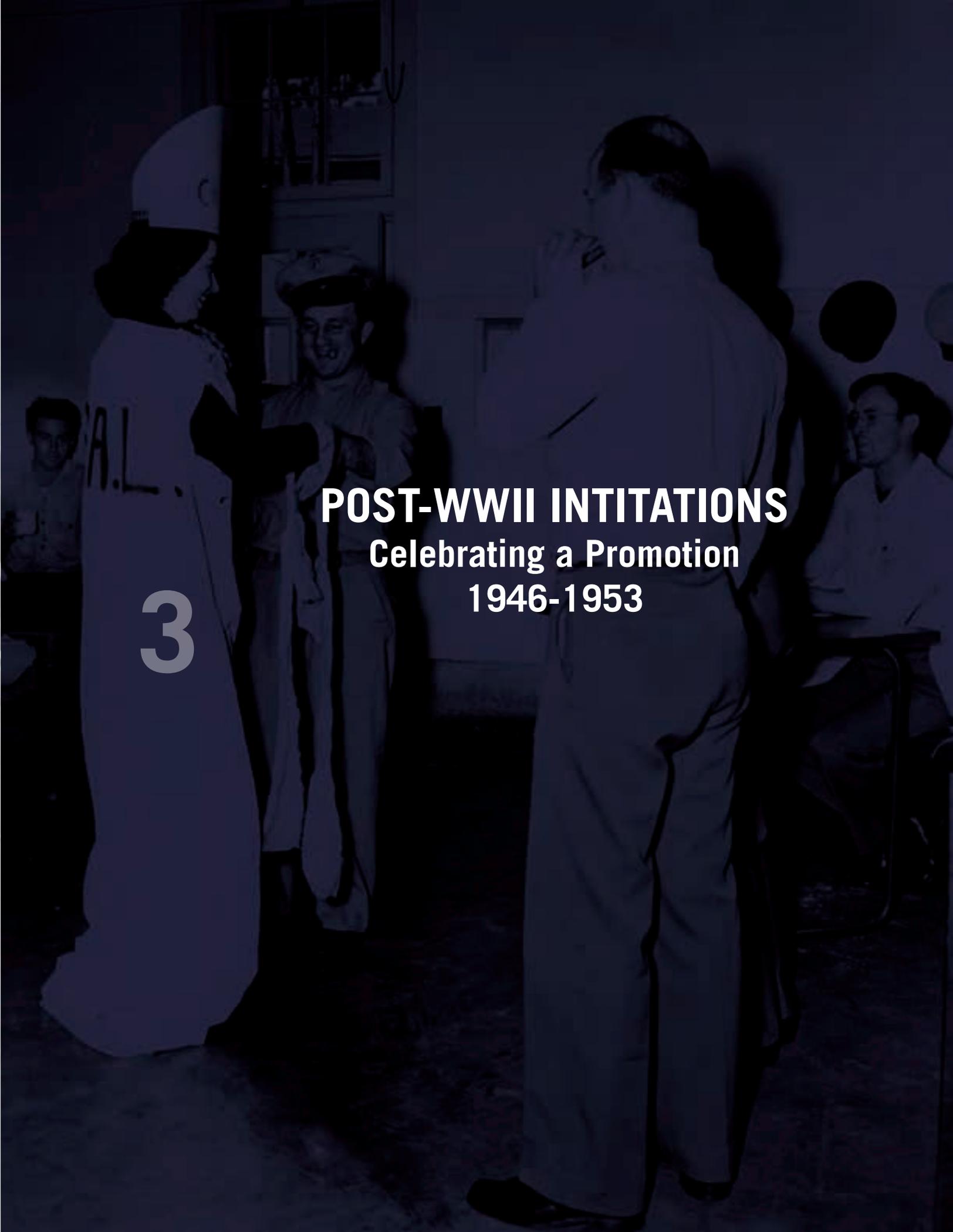
Stocks later became a favorite prop for CPO initiations.



“Truth-Serum” for CPO initiations evolved from “medicine” administered by the “dentist” during crossing the line ceremonies.

*Scenes from USS Wasp CV-8 Crossing the Equator Ceremony in January 1942. CPO initiations later adopted some of the props and practices from crossing the line ceremonies.*

NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPHS



3

## POST-WWII INTITATIONS

Celebrating a Promotion

1946-1953



*Naval History and Heritage Command photograph*

1949 Naval Reserve Training Center Chicopee Ma., chief petty officers toss a new chief into a swimming pool. Throwing new chief petty officers into water was a common practice in chief initiations during the 1940s through the 1960s.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH  
 1948 ca. A female Chief Storekeeper (CSK) faces the Judge and the Sheriff during her initiation. Many of the early CPO initiation rituals were "borrowed" from shipboard "Crossing the Line" (equator) ceremonies.

Chief petty officer initiations may have taken place prior to World War II. However, it wasn't until after the war that they became more prominent and common. CPO initiations, as they were referred to at the time, were simply a way to welcome new chief petty officers into the mess. The events were not "secret" but were generally confined behind doors in the CPO mess.

The earliest record of CPO initiations, in the U.S. Navy photograph archives, consists of two photographs of a female Chief Storekeeper's initiation circa 1948. The chief petty officers in the photograph and the location are not identified. Initiations ashore generally took place in a CPO club on base. CPO clubs were very common and well-patronized through the early 1970s. Initiations at CPO clubs generally included the consumption of alcohol by both the participants and the observers. Another common trend seen in photographs, both afloat and ashore was cigars. Photographs from early initiations often depict "genuine" chief petty officers enjoying a cigar while observing initiation events.

There are other official Navy photographs dating from the mid-1950s that show new chief petty officers in wash khaki or dress uniforms participating in various events such as

eating their first meal in the CPO mess from a wooden trough, performing skits, singing songs and being tossed into a swimming pool. The initiations that took place aboard a ship were always alcohol free. In 1953, Life Magazine published an article about the navy that mentioned CPO initiations and included a color photo of boot-chiefs eating from wooden troughs with large metal spoons. The article referred to CPO initiations as induction.<sup>17</sup>



TIME LIFE MAGAZINE 28 September 1953 Photograph  
 1953 New chiefs on an aircraft carrier eating their first meal in the CPO mess from wooden troughs.

# CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OPEN MESS ASHORE



Chief Petty Officer Clubs were very popular and well patronized through the early 1980s. CPO clubs were a place for chiefs and their spouses to eat, drink and dance. The clubs were also the perfect place to hold CPO initiations. Today, all military clubs, officer, enlisted, and CPO, are becoming extinct. Cuts in funding along with the deglamorization of alcohol have resulted in clubs moving from rank exclusive, night-time entertainment. Today, many former CPO clubs are open to all ranks serving coffee and lunch as their main source of revenue.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH  
1949 Chief Petty Officer's Mess Philadelphia Naval Base.

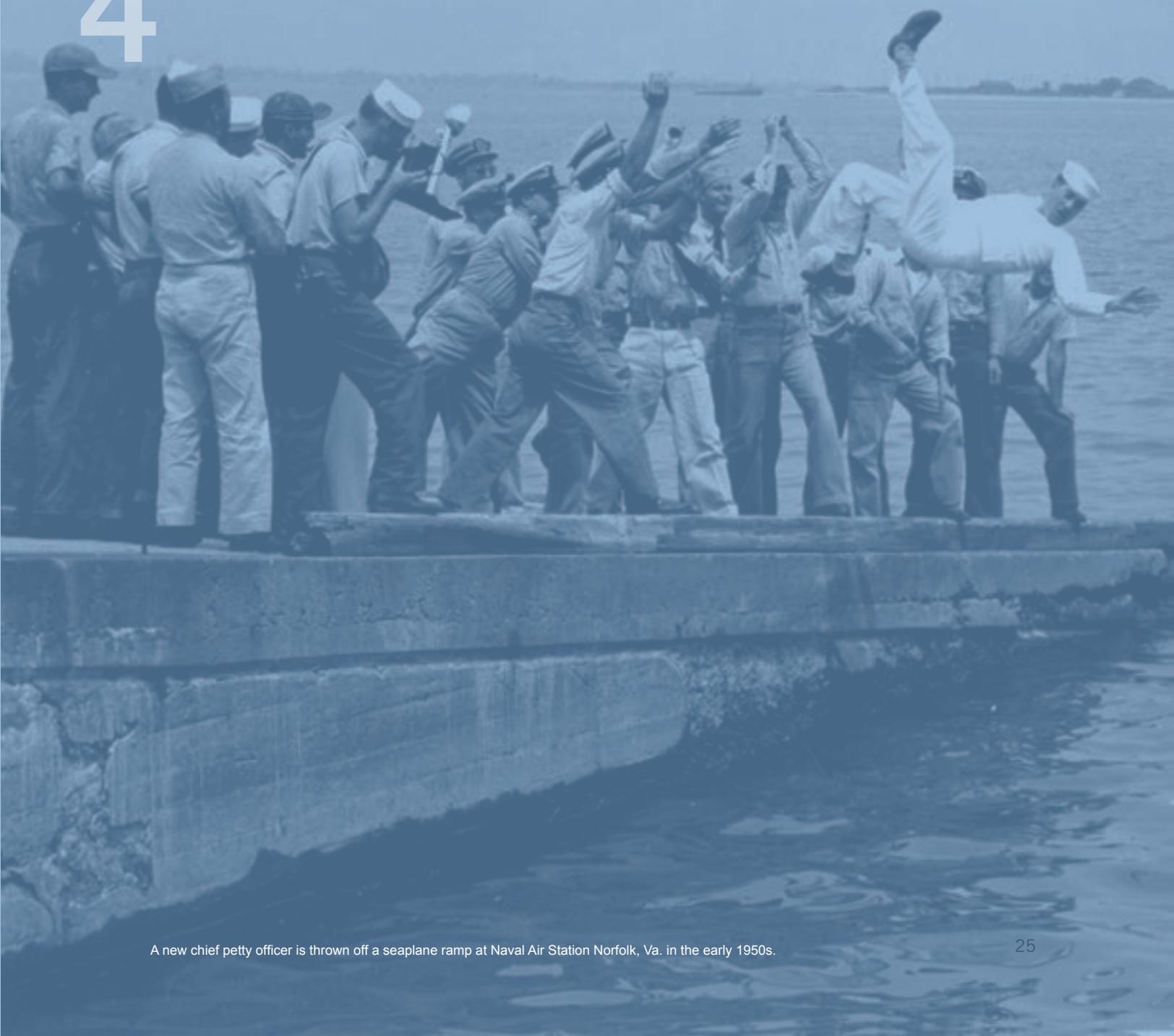


NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH 1950  
1950 CPO Open Mess in San Diego. Chief Petty Officer messes ashore were well patronized through the 1970s.

# CPO INITIATIONS EVOLVE

## 1954-1959

# 4



A new chief petty officer is thrown off a seaplane ramp at Naval Air Station Norfolk, Va. in the early 1950s.

# CHIEF INITIATIONS

## Early 1950s

Chief petty officer initiations of the 1940s and early 1950s were simple, fun events that welcomed new CPOs into the Chief's Mess. Many of the events, such as tossing a shipmate into a swimming pool, were performed in front of the officers and crew. It wasn't uncommon for seamen and junior petty officers to assist in throwing a Boot Chief into the water. After the new chief dried off and changed clothes the final event generally consisted of having a few, or more, drinks ashore.

Early CPO initiations were usually confined to individual CPO Messes consisting of the new chiefs promoted within the command. CPO initiations occurred year-round because Sailors were only promoted in monthly increments--there was no frocking in those days.



*Hampton Roads Naval Museum Photographs*

1951 New CPOs Gwen Dee Perry and George Moose come ashore after being tossed into the water at Naval Air Station Norfolk, Va. Chief initiations in the 1940s and early 1950s often concluded by throwing the new chiefs into bodies of water or swimming pools.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH  
 1955 Boot Chiefs aboard USS *Forrestal* CVA-59 line up in the CPO mess during their initiation.

In the post-WWII years, first class petty officers were only required to be recommended by their commanding officer and to pass the chief petty officer examination for their rating in order to be promoted to chief--there were no CPO selection boards. Their examination score and evaluation marks were calculated to create a final multiple. The final multiple established the CPO candidate's position on the promotion list to chief petty officer. Selection to chief was based on service member's position on the list and the number of available quotas. The process had been in place since the turn of the century. The chief's exam was given twice a year. The exams were sent back to the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) to be scored. The advancement results were mailed by BUPERS to ships and shore installations. The results were often posted on bulletin boards outside the base or ship's admin office. A posted advancement list was the way that most Sailors found out they were selected for chief. CPO promotion lists promulgated by naval message did not become common

until the late 1960s.

There was no frocking in those days and chief petty officers were promoted in monthly increments through the early 1970s. As a result, CPO initiations were often held monthly during most of the year. Sailors often only had to wait a few weeks before being promoted, especially if they were advanced in the first increment.

New CPOs often didn't have a lot of time to buy new uniforms. CPO dress blue uniforms were not available in the Navy Exchange Uniform shop--since there were no uniform shops. Sailors bought their uniforms directly from the Navy in what was called "small stores." Small stores generally carried uniform items for Sailors below chief. Chief's uniforms often had to be ordered from the Naval Clothing Factory in Brooklyn, N.Y. and took weeks to be delivered. New chiefs could also purchase uniforms from local naval tailors who were always located near naval shore installations. The first thing many new chiefs did

after being promoted was to go to the disbursing office and collect their \$300 clothing allowance.

Prior to 1957, the uniforms of female chief petty officers were not as difficult to obtain since they wore the same uniform as first class petty officers and below. A new female



*Hampton Roads Naval Museum Photograph*  
1951 ca. Naval Air Reserve Training Unit (NARTU) NAS Norfolk CPO  
Gwen Dee Perry enjoying his first meal in the CPO Mess--from a  
wooden trough. The food was still edible in the fifties and early sixties.

chief only had to change her rating badge and cap device. However, in 1957, the color of the female CPO dress blue uniform was changed from navy blue to black to match female officer uniforms<sup>18</sup>. Female personnel below chief continued wearing navy blue until the early 1970s.

Chief Hospital Corpsman Welland Shoop joined the Navy

on December 27, 1941 and served through May 1945. He joined the Naval Reserve in October 1950 and was recalled to active duty in 1951. Shoop was serving at Naval Powder Factory, Indian Head Md. in 1952 when he was selected for chief petty officer. He found out he was selected when his name appeared on a list posted outside the base admin office. His advancement date was within a week from the time he was notified. Shoop barely had time to buy chief petty officer uniforms. His initiation consisted of eating his first meal as a chief with a big spoon from a wooden trough--there were no other events and he didn't have a charge book. Shoop remained on active duty after the Korean War and eventually retired as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 in January 1974<sup>19</sup>.

Chief Air Traffic Controller Robert C. Cooper enlisted in the Navy on February 12, 1940. He reported for active duty on January 13, 1941. Cooper started out as an aviation mechanic but eventually changed ratings and became an air traffic controller. While stationed in the Philippines in 1952, he took the chief's test for the first time. Shortly thereafter, he transferred back to the U.S. and found out, via the base personnel office, he made chief. He was never initiated because he was new to the command and no one knew he had been selected. On the day of his promotion he simply showed up for work wearing a service khaki uniform. Cooper retired from active duty in September 1959<sup>20</sup>.

In the 1940s and 1950s, there was no "CPO season" as we know it today. There were no activities such as fund-raising, organized car-washes or group physical training. There was no professional training. CPO charge books did not exist. The most common event was the first class petty officers selected for chief were sometimes brought into the CPO mess and humorously harassed. They were often charged to get coffee for "genuine" chiefs. Some have reported to have been tasked to wash their leading chief's car or pick up dry cleaning. However, for most, the main event

from the time they were selected until the time they were advanced was the day of the CPO initiation.

The initiations of the 1940s and 1950s were not the elaborate events that occur today. The initiations were usually overseen over by the leading chief of the mess. At the time, there were no senior or master chiefs in the Navy. CPO initiations were not organized and varied from command to command. In the post-war years more women were being promoted to chief. At the time, women were not assigned to at sea duty so there was no effect on CPO initiations aboard ships. However, CPO initiations ashore that included women were sometimes adjusted to accommodate females. Women were often handled separately, but not always.

After initiation there was no pinning ceremony since chief petty officers did not wear collar devices. Collar devices for CPOs were not authorized until 1959. Initially, all CPOs, E7-E9, wore the same collar devices. The final event of CPO initiations often involved the new CPOs donning their new hats and raising mugs of beer in a toast to the Navy. Promotion to chief was commonly referred to as “wearing the hat.”

Roy Cooper enlisted in the Navy in 1945 at the age of 17. He initially served in the deck force for almost two years--as a “deck ape” as he put it. He became a quartermaster second class but converted to electronics technician (ET) in the mid-1950s due to the quartermaster rating being over manned. He was sent to a year-long ET ‘A’ school. Cooper was selected for Chief Electronics Technician (Acting) in 1956 while stationed in Japan. He was notified of his selection when his name appeared on a promotion list. He was advanced three-months later. There was no activity in the months prior to his initiation--he didn’t have a charge book. Cooper described his initiation as a “drunken brawl” that made no lasting impression on him--other than a hangover. Roy Cooper retired as an ETC in 1964 <sup>21</sup>.



*LEUCI Collection*  
Pre-1952 CPO cap device. Prior to 1952 the letters USN were curved along the anchor chain.

# NAVAL AIR RESERVE TRAINING UNIT (NARTU) NAS NORFOLK 1954



*Hampton Roads Naval Museum Photograph*

New Chief Warren Griffin is tossed off a seaplane ramp at NAS Norfolk, Va. Throwing new chiefs in the water was a common practice in CPO initiations through the 1960s.



*Hampton Roads Naval Museum Photograph*

New CPO Warren Griffin coming ashore after being thrown off the seaplane ramp at Naval Air Station Norfolk. Va.



*Hampton Roads Naval Museum Photograph*

Chief Warren Griffin eating his first meal in the CPO mess.

# USS *Forrestal* CVA-59 1955

## Songs, Skits and Costumes

CPO initiations began to change during the late 1950s. CPO selectees, or Boot-Chiefs, were no longer simply thrown in a pool or tossed into the water. It became common for new chiefs to eat their first meal in the CPO Mess from a wooden trough using a big metal spoon. The food was edible and not yet the distasteful concoctions that would appear over the following decades. Boot chiefs wore their new chief uniforms during initiation--sometimes with minor modifications such as a "Boot-Chief" sign or a non-regulation hat. Their new uniforms were generally not ruined by initiation although they sometimes got wet.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND Photographs  
1955 Chief petty officer initiation aboard USS *Forrestal* CVA-59

Bob Walker made chief in 1956. He was advanced to Chief Radarman (Acting) on June 16, 1956. Walker recalled:

*“As a chief petty officer selectee I was required to go through the time-honored tradition of initiation. The process was designed to challenge your worth by being subjected to verbal harassment, eating slop out of a trough, drinking copious amounts of alcoholic beverages, and other demeaning events. When it was over I couldn’t have hit my rear end with the help of a 10-hand working party. Somehow I drove home and Fran could smell me as soon as I got out of the car. She immediately cleaned me up and put me to bed”<sup>22</sup>.*



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH

Robert J. Walker, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) 1975-1979

Xavier J. Leuci made Chief Radioman in 1960 while assigned as a Radioman 'B' school instructor at Naval Training Center, Bainbridge Md. He had to wait several months after being notified of his pending promotion because he didn't have enough "time-in-service". He was promoted in the final increment along with six or seven other selectees. In the months prior to initiation day there was not a lot of activity with the other selectees and only some minor "ribbing" from the genuine chiefs on base. On initiation day the selectees reported to the chief's club wearing their new dress blues. They were "issued" canvas leggings and large cardboard "boot chief" signs. CPO combination caps were worn backwards with the leather strap around their chins. During initiation they stayed in their dress blue uniforms. They sang songs and performed some skits. Leuci visited a CPO "barber" and had a chunk of hair removed from his scalp. Later that day, the bottom of his tie was snipped off by another chief. All of the selectees stood before the "judge" to explain why they should receive an acting appointment to chief petty officer. The new chiefs ate their first meal in the mess from a wooden trough with their hands tied behind their backs. Before being formally appointed, they were congratulated by the Commanding Officer of the Naval Training Center who witnessed the entire initiation. The ceremony ended when all the new chiefs donned their hats and raised their beer mugs in a toast. The mugs were kept as a keepsake. During the initiation several chiefs in attendance took photographs and home movies of the activities. After the initiation, the new and old chiefs, attended a reception with their wives at the base CPO club. Leuci retired as a Senior Chief Radioman in 1971.



*Leuci collection*  
RMCS Xavier James Leuci in the "Med" 1964



*LEUCI Collection*  
1958 was the last year before CPOs began wearing collar devices. "Wearing the Hat" was the final event of CPO initiations. Prior to the mid-1960s all newly promoted chiefs received acting appointments to CPO. After three years the appointments were made permanent.

# Chief's Initiation

## U.S. Naval Training Center Bainbridge, Md. 1961



*LEUCI Collection*  
1961 CPO initiation USNTC Bainbridge Md. New CPOs don their hats and drink a beer to celebrate their acting appointments as chief petty officers



*LEUCI Collection*  
1961 U.S. Naval Training Center Bainbridge, Md. Defense Attorneys, Judges, and Sheriffs along with alcohol began to be part of CPO initiations in the late 1950s.



*LEUCI Collection*  
1961 U.S. Naval Training Center Bainbridge, Md. Chief's initiation beer mug was typical of what new chiefs received as a keepsake.



*LEUCI Collection*  
1961 CPO initiation USNTC Bainbridge, Md. RMC(A) Xavier J. Leuci leads fellow selectees in a rowing skit. Chief petty officers typically wore their new CPO uniforms, often with added accouterments, during their initiation day through the early 1960s.



I AM A BOOT CHIEF  
I AM LOWER THAN 7 TONS  
OF SNAIL SHIT ON THE  
BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

## THINGS START TO GET MESSY

1960-1973

# 5

RMC Tom Perkins wears his new dress blues with an added accoutrement on the day of his initiation in 1960.

# CPO INSIGNIA

1958-1969



*LEUCI Collection*

The chief petty officer cap device was modified in 1952 to have the "USN" on a horizontal line. All CPOs, E7-E9, wore the same cap device until 1969.

There were no CPO pinning ceremonies prior to 1960 since chief petty officers did not wear collar devices. CPO collar devices were introduced in 1959. All chief petty officers, E7-E9, initially wore the same device. It wasn't until 1961 that senior chief and master chief petty officer collar devices were first authorized.

When the senior chief and master chief pay grades were established in 1958, new E8 and E9 rating badges were authorized. However, all chief petty officers continued to wear the same cap device until 1969 when E8, E9, and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) cap devices were authorized.

Prior to adoption of CPO pinning ceremonies, the final event in making chief was generally referred to as "wearing the hat".

## 1960s and the Vietnam Era - Things are Getting Messy

In 1958, the Public Law 85-422 established E8 and E9 pay grades for the U.S. Armed Forces<sup>23</sup>. The new “Super” chiefs’ roles in the Navy were not clearly defined. Senior Chiefs and Master Chiefs billets were intended to be leadership positions for chief petty officers who remained in the Navy beyond 20 years of service. Some thought that E8 and E9 chiefs would replace warrant officers.

The status and role of E8 and E9 chiefs took years to take hold and develop. From 1959 until 1961, all chief petty officers wore the same collar and cap devices. In 1961, senior chief and master chief collar devices were authorized<sup>24</sup>. All CPOs continued to wear the same cap device until 1969<sup>25</sup>. In those days, it wasn’t uncommon for senior chiefs and master chiefs to simply be referred to as “Chief.”

During the 1950s and early 1960s boot chiefs (CPO selectees) generally went through their initiations wearing their new chief petty officer dress blue or khaki uniforms. Accouterments were often added to the uniform that included boot camp canvas leggings, and a sign stating “I am Boot Chief.” Boot chiefs were often seen wearing their combination cap backwards and or without a cap cover. Later in the mid-1960s, CPO selectees stopped wearing their uniforms during initiation. Initiations had become so “messy” that new CPO uniforms would be ruined if worn. It became common practice to direct boot chiefs to appear in silly costumes depicting a theme or character designated by their CPO mess. Most costumes were humorous designs

intended to entertain the “genuine” chiefs on initiation day.

CPO initiations began to evolve in the 1960s. Some of the rituals seen in “crossing the line” ceremonies such as eating distasteful concoctions of food products and drinking “truth serum” were adopted for CPO initiations. Some of the props used in crossing the line ceremonies such as stocks and ice-filled coffins began to be seen in CPO initiations. Characters like the “judge”, “defense attorney”, and “sheriff” became fixtures as CPO initiations essentially became mock trials or kangaroo courts.

Charge books also became more common. However, they were not the keepsakes that are seen today. CPO selectees were generally required to carry them and present them to any CPO who requested to see it. The most common charge book was one made from a legal size navy record book with a green cover. CPO selectees were required to carry the book at all times. The books were often attached to a line or chain worn by the selectee. Genuine chief petty officers would sign the book and enter charges against the selectee to be evaluated by the judge on initiation day.

Chief petty officers were expected to enter words of wisdom or humorous notes concerning fines to be paid on initiation day. However, it was very common for lewd and vulgar statements to be entered into the book. Desecration of the book by cigarette burns and smearing food or feces on pages was not uncommon. The books were not kept in elegant boxes (vessels) as they are today. After initiation the books were often discarded due to their vile smell and vulgar contents.

# CPO INITIATION 1963

USS *McKinley* AGC-7

Chief petty officer initiations began to change in the 1960s. In the early 1960s new chiefs generally wore wash khaki uniforms on initiation day. The wash khaki uniform was often worn backwards as seen in the images from an initiation on USS *McKinley* in the summer of 1963. Within a few years, wash khakis would be replaced with costumes.

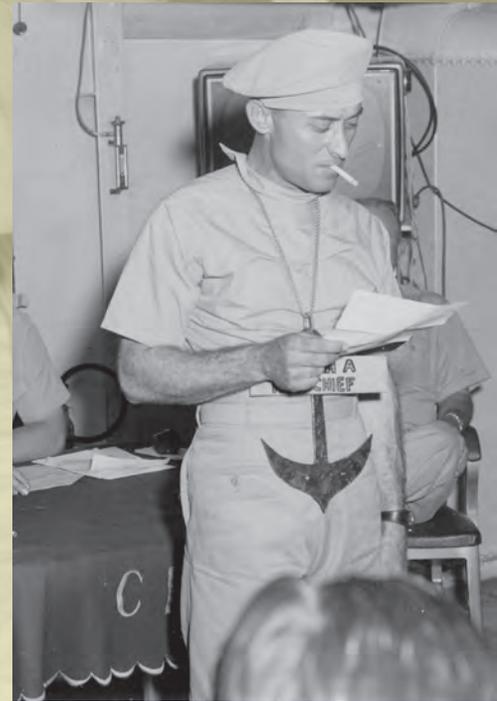
New CPOs ate their first meal in the CPO mess from a trough--the food was still edible in the early 1960s. Signs were worn to remind all that they were new boot chiefs. CPO initiations had begun to migrate towards a mock trial, similar to "crossing the line" ceremonies.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPHS  
CPO initiation aboard USS *McKinley* AGC-7 in the summer of 1963.



CPO initiations of the time often included senior non-commissioned officers of other services as participants. Commanding Officers and other wardroom officers were often invited to witness and participate in the initiation.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPHS  
CPO initiation aboard USS *McKinley* AGC-7 in the summer of 1963.

# UNITED STATES NAVY CHIEF PETTY OFFICER CREED

During the course of this day, you have been caused to suffer indignities, to experience humiliations. This you have accomplished with rare good grace and therefore, we now believe it fitting to explain to you why this was done. There was no intent, no desire, to demean. Pointless as it may have seemed to you, there was a valid, time-honored reason behind every single deed, behind each pointed barb.

By experience, by performance and by testing, you have been this day advanced to CHIEF PETTY OFFICER. You have one more hurdle to overcome. In the United States Navy and only in the United States Navy, E-7 carries unique responsibilities. No other armed force throughout the world carries the responsibilities nor grants privileges to its enlisted comparable to the privileges and responsibilities you are now bound to observe and expected to fulfill.

Your entire way of life has now been changed. More will be expected of you, more will be demanded of you. Not because you are an E-7, but because you are now a CHIEF PETTY OFFICER. You have not merely been promoted one pay grade--you have joined an exclusive fraternity, and as in all fraternities, you have a responsibility to your brothers, even as they have a responsibility to you.

Always bear in mind that no other armed force has rate or rank equivalent to that of the United States Navy. Granted that all armed forces have two classes of service: enlisted and commissioned, however, the United States Navy has the distinction of having four i.e., Enlisted, CHIEF PETTY OFFICER, Commissioned Warrant Officer and Commissioned Officer. This is why we in the United States Navy may maintain with pride our feelings of superiority once we have attained the position of E-7.

These privileges, these responsibilities do not appear in print, they have no official standing, they cannot be referred to by name, number nor file. They exist because for over 200 years the CHIEFS before you have freely accepted responsibility beyond call of printed assignment, their actions and their performance, demanded the respect of their seniors as well as their juniors.

It is now required that you be a fountain of wisdom, the ambassador of good will, the authority in personnel relations as well as their technical application. "Ask the Chief" is a household word in and out of the Navy. You are now the "CHIEF".

The exalted-position you have now received, and I use the word "exalted" advisedly, exists because of the attitude, the performance of the Chiefs before you. It shall exist only so long as you and your compatriots maintain these standards.

So this is why you were caused to experience these things. You were subjected to humiliations to prove to you that humility is a good, a great, a necessary change which cannot mar you-which in fact, strengthens you, and in your future as a CHIEF PETTY OFFICER, you will be caused to suffer indignities, to experience humiliations far beyond those imposed upon you today. Bear them with the dignity, and with the same good grace, which you bore these today.

It is our intention that you will never forget this day. It is our intention to test you--to try you--to accept you. Your performance today has assured us that you will wear your hat with aplomb brothers in arms before you.

I take a deep, sincere pleasure in clasping your hand, and accepting you into our midst.

Chief Petty Officer's Creed (old version). The original version of the CPO Creed was written after 1948 indicated by the references to E7 as a paygrade. Reading the creed became a fixture of CPO initiations in the 1960s. The original version of the creed had references to fraternity, brotherhood, and humiliation which were later dropped when the creed was re-written in the mid-1990s.



Photo from FORCM Richard P. Johnson collection  
Richard P. Johnson became the first Naval Reserve Force Master Chief in 1973.

Richard “Dick” Johnson transferred to NAS New Orleans in August 1965. While checking in, he was notified that he had been selected for chief. He was given a charge book and told he would be promoted in the last increment (November 1965). During the following weeks Johnson attached a line to his charge book and carried around his neck. He presented it to every chief he encountered. The chiefs made humorous entries in his book concerning his

short-comings as a potential chief petty officer that were used against him on initiation day. During the 1960s there was no fund-raising or formal training for CPO selectees.

On initiation day, he and four others wore wash khakis without collar devices. The ones that drank were “loosened up” with alcohol and were brought in one-by-one to face the judge in a mock trial. Johnson was fined \$10 and had to drink some truth serum--a concoction of beer, egg yolks, and food coloring.

After the trials were over the boot chiefs assembled in the CPO club. They stood with their hands behind their backs and ate a “Cajun” meal from a foil-lined pig trough. Johnson recalled,

*“the pig trough had a stew mixture starting with rattlesnake meat and all the other New Orleans culture menu items...the trough was signed by all the attending CPOs after the initiation was completed.”*

After eating, the new chiefs left to get cleaned up and the base officers were invited into the CPO club. The new chiefs returned in summer khakis and assembled on the floor of the mess. They read the Chief’s Creed, were charged with its meaning, and then they were pinned. Master Chief Johnson eventually became the first Force Master Chief of the Naval Reserve (1973-75) <sup>26</sup>.



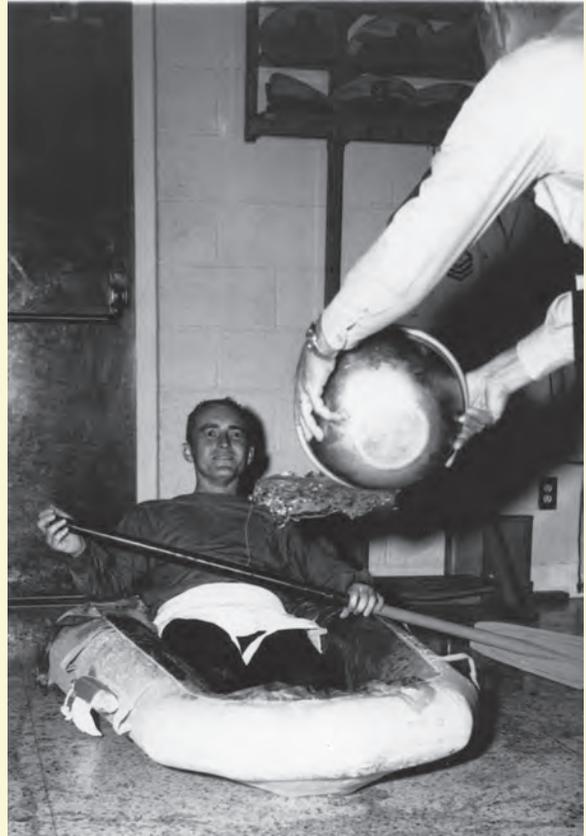
Photo from FORCM Richard P. Johnson collection  
1965 Pig trough from Richard P. Johnson’s initiation signed by all the chiefs present at his initiation. Troughs were common in CPO initiations through the 1990s.

# CPO INITIATION 1965

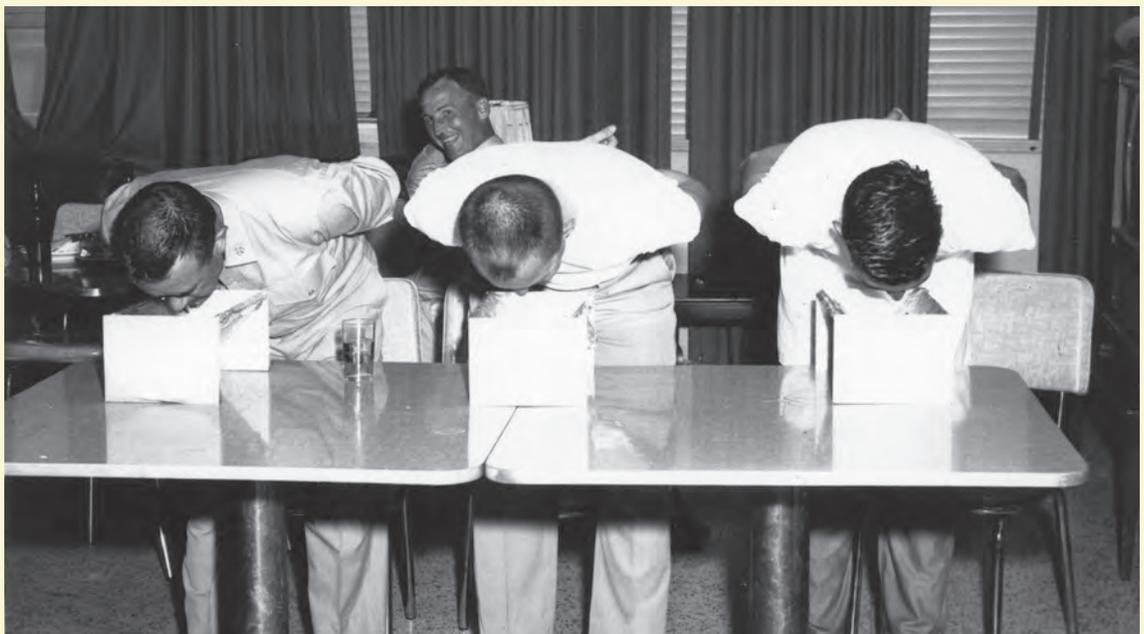
NAS New Orleans, LA



*Photo from FORCM Richard P. Johnson collection*  
1965 ADRCA Richard P. Johnson



*Photo from FORCM Richard P. Johnson collection*  
1965 New Chief Johnson gets an icy fresh water wash-down during initiation.



*Photo from FORCM Richard P. Johnson collection*  
1965 NAS New Orleans CPO Club Dick Johnson (center) and fellow new chiefs eat their first meal in the mess.

Chief petty officer initiations took place in Vietnam. Paul Bohn joined the Navy in 1956 and became an Aviation Metalsmith. He was promoted to Chief in 1966 while in-country Vietnam assigned to River Forces 116. Bohn took the chief's test in Imperial Beach, Calif. prior to leaving for Vietnam. He was notified of his selection when his name appeared on a teletype message announcing CPO selections. His promotion was effective immediately. His initiation consisted of getting extremely drunk with several genuine chief petty officers. He didn't have a charge book. Bohn retired in 1990 as a Command Master Chief

Chief Yeoman Helen Sadowski enlisted in 1952. She was selected for chief in 1966 while stationed in Newport, R.I. Helen did not have a charge book. Instead she had a charge sheet that was signed by genuine CPOs. The sheet was used as evidence against her during her trial on initiation day. Sadowski was one of twelve selectees that went through initiation and the only woman. She wasn't treated different from the men. She went through the same initiation events such as being placed in the stocks, eating food from a trough, and drinking truth serum. Chief Sadowski retired from the Navy in 1971 after 19 years and six months of service <sup>28</sup>.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH

1961 Rear Admiral Hubert J. Van Peenen, Commanding Officer Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va, congratulates HMC Lillian A. Moon as Raymond W. Ammond, David P. Decker, Jr. and James C. Martin look on--on the occasion of their appointments to Chief Hospital Corpsman.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH  
Master Chief Gunner's Mate Delbert D. Black served as the first  
Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) from 1967-1971

### **MCPON Black - Lays Down the Law**

In January 1967, the office of the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Naval Personnel was established. Master Chief Gunner's Mate Delbert D. Black was appointed to the position. In March 1967, the position was renamed Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON).

On June 17, 1967, SECNAVINST 5060.20 was released which set Navy policy for ceremonies which included CPO initiations. The instruction stated:

*"Policy. It shall be the policy within the Department of the Navy that ceremonies, initiations and similar activities be conducted with dignity, with due regard for hazards to participants and with appropriate consideration of the honor and pride associated with wearing the uniform."*

*"Action. CDRs, COs...shall ensure that all ceremonies and initiations conducted under their cognizance are properly supervised, not hazardous to personnel, and are carried out in such a manner as will reflect credit upon the naval service."*

The instruction was interpreted by many chief petty officers as an end to CPO initiations since many of the initiation activities conflicted with the instruction. MCPON Black addressed the concern over SECNAVINST 5060 by stating:

*"We had a large number of telephone calls and letters last summer asking for guidance on CPO initiations. These were the result of a policy directive on the subject of initiations and ceremonies (SECNAVINST. 5060-20). The instruction seemed clear to me; it said in effect that CPO initiations and ceremonies associated with special events such as crossing the equator are permissible as long as they are not hazardous or detrimental, and do not involve unbecoming conduct.*

*A lot of chiefs got the idea that this meant the traditional, highly informal CPO initiation should be discontinued and replaced with a strictly formal ceremony. Not so.*

*There is no objection to CPO initiations conducted in a humorous vein, but at the same time, they should not be hazardous. Proper supervision and planning can insure that the honor and pride that go with making chief are not overshadowed by fun and games. We should not force the initiates to eat or drink against their wishes, nor should we do anything that could lead to bodily injury.*

*By tradition, fledgling chiefs are not in a particularly dignified category during their initiation. However, those conducting the ceremony should insure an appropriate atmosphere of dignity to avoid any humiliation to the initiate. In addition, the initiation should end with a formal ceremony during which the new chief is reminded of his responsibilities and is officially welcomed into the CPO category. <sup>29</sup>"*

CPO initiations continued. However, many provisions of SECNAVINST 5060 were generally ignored. Alcohol abuse, the consumption of food concoctions, unsafe events and the humiliation of CPO selectees remained the norm.

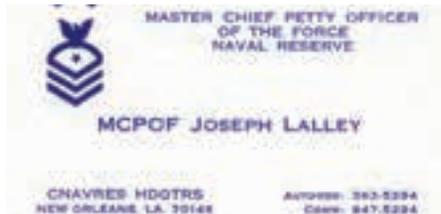


*NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH*

MCPON Black speaks to the NAS Corpus Christi CPO mess in 1968. Black began issuing guidance for CPO initiations in the late 1960s. Many Chief Petty Officers of the time considered any changes to CPO initiations as a break with Navy traditions.

## CPO Initiations late-1960s

Joe Lalley was assigned to NARTU NAS Norfolk, Va. when he made Chief Yeoman in April 1968. He was notified of his selection two months before he was advanced. During that time he carried a charge book, memorized the Chief's Creed and performed various tasks and personal services for the CPO mess. All the pre-initiation activities were kept behind closed doors--never in front of the crew. Lalley's charge book listed all his "short comings and offenses" that were used to determine fines on initiation day. Each time he failed to comply with an order from a chief he was fined. Many of the chiefs at his initiation were WWII veterans. He ended up being fined about \$100 which went towards the initiation costs. He was given a CPO hat and collar devices during initiation. Later he received a cup and certificate from the CPO mess to remember the day. Lalley was also given \$50 of his money back. Joe Lalley retired in 1979 after serving as the second Naval Reserve Force Master Chief from August 1975 through August 1976<sup>30</sup>.



*Photograph from Joe Lalley collection*

Master Chief Petty of the Force (MCPOF) and Master Chief Petty of the Command (MCPOC) titles were later changed to Force Master Chief (FORCM) and Command Master Chief. (CMDCM)



*Photograph from Joe Lalley collection*

Joe Lalley was appointed Chief Yeoman in April 1968. Later he served as the second Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Naval Reserve 1975-76.



1960 CPO Initiation The first meal in the CPO Mess was an event to remember.

William Plackett was advanced to Chief Radioman in 1968. Plackett was notified of his selection by a letter sent to his command from BUPERS. The CPO advancement list was not promulgated via naval message at that time. He was the only Sailor selected for chief assigned to the shore installation at Bahrain. He was initiated aboard USS *Valcour* AVP-55 in Bahrain.

USS *Valcour* was on a year-long deployment to Bahrain and also had several Sailors selected for chief. A few pre-initiation activities took place aboard USS *Valcour*. Plackett was brought aboard a couple times before initiation. He experienced some minor harassment from CPOs but essentially there was no activity until the day of initiation. Plackett did not have a charge book nor did he perform any fund-raising. Since his initiation was held aboard ship no alcohol was involved and all the initiation related events were confined to the CPO mess. At the conclusion of his initiation there was a pinning ceremony. However, family members were not present for the ceremony. There was no khaki ball<sup>31</sup>.



Plackett Collection  
1968 RMC Bill Plackett aboard USS *Forrestal* CVA-59

During the mid-1960s and through the mid-1970s the Navy was engaged in the Vietnam War. There was a military draft and many young men joined the Navy to avoid being drafted into the Army. The Navy faced numerous personnel issues relating to equal opportunity, racism, discrimination, quality of life, discipline, and drug abuse. Retention of first term Sailors was at an all-time low. The draft was scheduled to end in 1973 and U.S. military would be an all-volunteer force. Navy leadership focused primarily on these issues and CPO initiation concerns took a back seat to the other

more important issues.

Many CPO initiation practices and events were in direct conflict with Navy regulations relating to hazing, bullying, and harassment—especially when viewed by today’s standards. The same could be said for other traditional ceremonies such as crossing the line, tacking on crow’s, and wetting down parties. However, the attitudes of senior enlisted and officer leadership, of the 1960s and 1970s, were often tolerant of questionable practices as long as there were no serious injuries and no serious complaints.

### Admiral Zumwalt becomes CNO

On 1 July 1970, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr. assumed command as the Chief of Naval Operations. Zumwalt had no immediate influence on CPO initiations. He was more focused on the Vietnam War and the transition of the U.S. Armed Forces from the military draft to an all-volunteer force. However, during his tenure several programs and policies were introduced to address equal opportunity and the quality of life of Sailors. It was also under Zumwalt that the senior enlisted leadership structure of the Navy came into being with the establishment of the CNO Advisory Board and the Command Master Chief Program in 1971. In the following decades, senior enlisted leaders, along with the MCPON, would influence change to various programs and policies affecting enlisted personnel, including reforms to CPO initiations.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH  
1970 CNO Zumwalt speaks with chief petty officers aboard USS *Biddle* CG-34 during his first visit to Naval Station Norfolk as CNO.

## MCPON Whittet - Establishment of Senior Enlisted Leadership

The senior enlisted leadership structure of the Navy began to expand and take root in the 1970s. In 1971, the CPO advisory Board to the Chief of Naval Operations was established before MCPON Black left office. Seven master chief and senior chief petty officers from the fleet were selected to join the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy on the board to advise the CNO on various matters relating to enlisted Sailors. The advisory board was the beginning of the senior enlisted leadership structure in the U.S. Navy <sup>32</sup>.

Later, in 1971, under the leadership of MCPON Whittet and Adm. Zumwalt, the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Command (MCPOC) program was announced in Z-Gram 95 <sup>33</sup>. The program established 23 billets at Fleet, Force, and other major commands for Master Chief Petty Officers of the Command (MCPOC). MCPOCs wore a five-point star as a specialty mark on their rating badges. It was also at this time that the MCPON began wearing the same star as a specialty mark. The MCPON and MCPOCs also began wearing the white Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA) badge. The MCPOC program was expanded to all other Navy commands. Commanding officers of ships and shore installations were authorized to designate an SEA for the command. The position was a collateral duty and the SEA didn't change their rating badge. However, they were authorized to wear the SEA badge.

During the 1970s the MCPON began to meet and communicate with the senior enlisted leaders regarding various topics including guidance for CPO initiations.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH  
John D. (Jack) Whittet served as the second Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy 1971-1975.



LEUCI Collection

1971 Senior Enlisted Advisor badge worn by MCPON Whittet and MCPON Walker.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH  
1972 MCPON Whittet meets with Pacific Fleet and Force Master Chiefs. Navy senior enlisted leadership began to expand in the early 1970s.



NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND PHOTOGRAPH

1971 The first CNO Advisory Board consisted of a small mix of seven senior chiefs and master chiefs along with the MCPON. The board was the beginning of formal senior enlisted leadership in the Navy.

## CPO Initiations 1970s - Things are Getting Out-Of-Hand

Jim Herdt's first recollection of a CPO initiation occurred around 1970 when he was a young petty officer first class aboard the USS Will Rogers SSBN-659<sup>34</sup>. While on patrol, two first class petty officers in the engineering department were selected for chief. When the patrol ended the boat tied up to a tender in Holy Lock, Scotland. Herdt recalled "the lines went over, the brow went over, the chiefs went over" taking the selectees with them. Herdt was coming off the evening watch around midnight when he witnessed several "very inebriated chief petty officers" lowering the two selectees in Stokes stretchers down through one of the hatches into the boat--both selectees were "passed out dead drunk." The next day the two selectees were chief petty officers.



*Herdt Collection*  
1975 ca. Chief Machinist's Mate (SS) Jim Herdt.



Ken Faller was initiated while he served in Vietnam. Faller was assigned to Inshore Undersea Warfare Group (IUWG) near the DMZ in 1971 when he was notified of his selection to Chief Engineman. He and four other selectees were ordered to come down to Da Nang for initiation. They were initiated by four chief petty officers. The five selectees were required to serve them breakfast and shine their jungle boots. Faller was required to walk around in diapers while serving drinks in the CPO club. Their initiation basically consisted of everyone getting drunk. Faller retired in 1983 as a Master Chief Engineman <sup>35</sup>.



*Faller collection*

Ken Faller served two tours in Vietnam. In 1971, during his second tour, he was selected for Chief Engineman.

# CPO INITIATION 1971

South Vietnam



*Ken Faller Photograph*

1971 RADM Wilson signs paperwork for ENC Ken Faller and a fellow CPO selectee. Note the petty officer first class collar devices on their wash khaki uniforms



*Ken Faller collection*

1971 Ken Faller (second from the right) and other CPO selectees shine the boots of genuine chief petty officers on initiation day in Vietnam.

# Plan of THE Day FOR BOOT CHIEFS

FRIDAY, 17TH DAY OF THE ELEVENTH MONTH, YEAR OF THE RATS

HONORABLE JUDGE: OSC STUBBS  
PROSECUTOR: HTC PASEUR DUTY CORPSMAN: MRC BEEMAN  
SHERIFF: HTC MEAGHER  
JURY: MMC KANTHACK & OSC JULIUS  
DUTY BOOT CHIEFS: ENC FALLER  
EMC SYPEK  
EMC COUNT  
HTC HESSINGER  
SKC PACQUING

## UNIFORM OF THE DAY

OFFICERS AND CHIEFS' IN GOOD STANDING: TROPICAL GREEN LONG  
CHIEFS NOT IN GOOD STANDING: TROPICAL GREEN LONG INSIDE OUT,  
SHIRT AND HAT ON BACKWARDS,  
COMBAT BOOT ON RIGHT FOOT;  
RUBBER BOOT ON LEFT FOOT WITH  
TROUSER LEG INSIDE. RIGHT RUBBER  
BOOT HANGING AROUND ONE'S NECK.

PERIODIC INITIATION ROUTINE: AS PRESCRIBED BY THE CPO MESS BY-LAWS WITH  
THE FOLLOWING MODIFICATIONS, SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH-OUT NOTICE DEPENDING  
ON THE WHIMS AND FANCIES OF CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS IN GOOD STANDING.

0001 REPORT TO THE SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR, SKCS ALFONSO, IN THE CPO LOUNG  
BARRACKS 14 NAU DANANG, RVN (VERY DISCRETLY).  
0600 BOOT CHIEF MUSTER IN THE CPO LOUNGE AND PREPARE COFFEE, UNDER  
INSTRUCTION  
0700 BOOT CHIEF COMMENCE HOLDING REVEILLE (BE PREPARED TO MEET WITH OBJECT  
SUCH AS COMBAT BOOTS, ALARM CLOCKS, AND DIRTY SOCKS.  
0818 BREAKFAST FOR BOOT CHIEFS  
1200 LUNCH FOR THE BOOT CHIEFS. COMMENCE INITIATION IN THE LIBRARY.

WHEN HOLDING REVEILLE FOR CHIEFS' IN GOOD STANDING:

BOOT CHIEFS ARE REMINDED THAT THOSE ABOUT TO BE AWAKENED HAVE SUFFERED  
UNTOLD MISERIES THE PREVIOUS DAY; THE MOVIE MAY NOT HAVE ENOUGH LEGS, THERE  
WAS LESS THAN FIFTY POUNDS OF "GOODIES IN THE REEFER FOR THE DIETERS TO  
MUNCH ON DURING THE FEW MOMENTS OF RELAXATION CHIEFS' ARE ALLOWED.

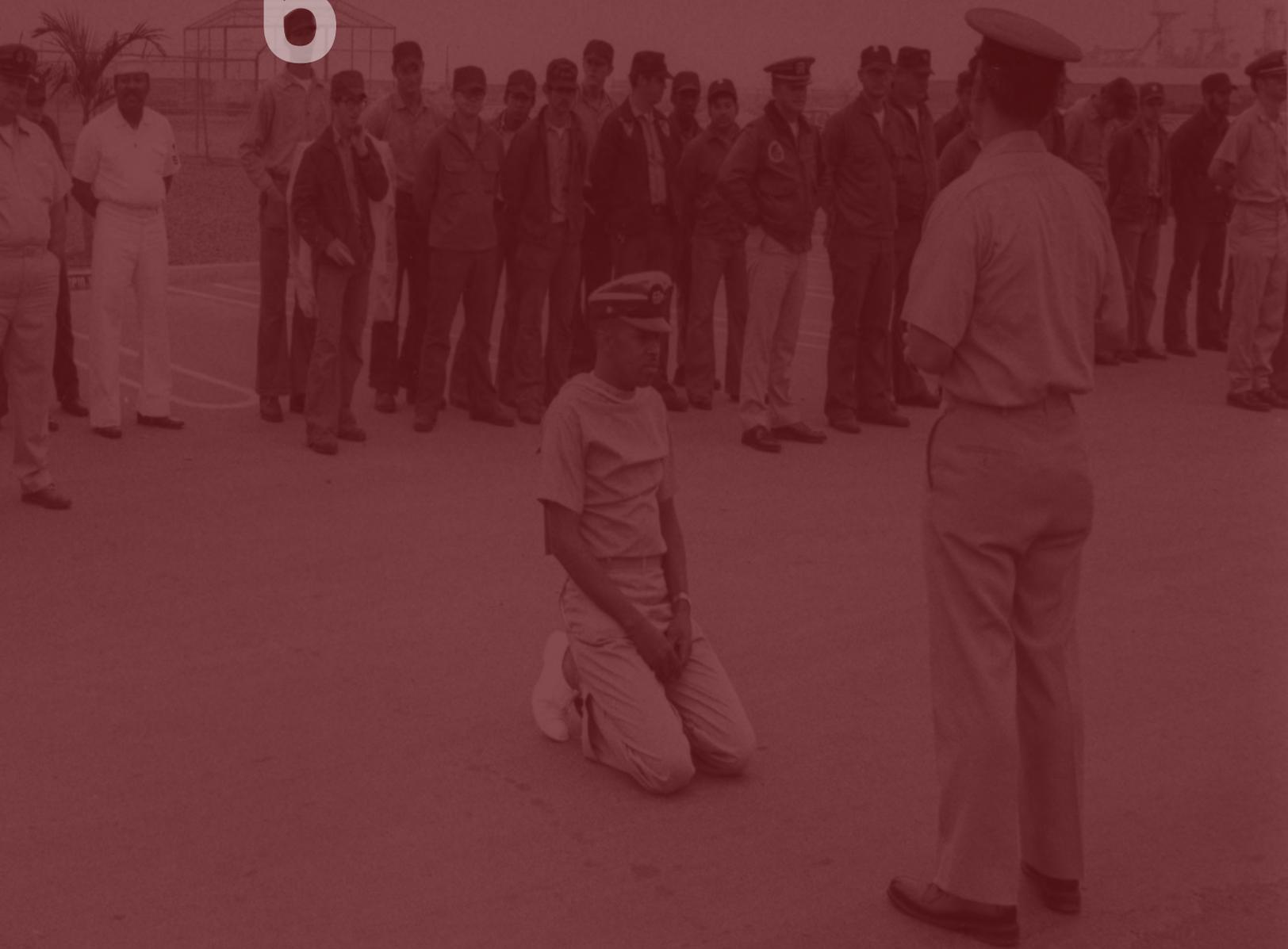
TAKE CARE IN ROUSING THEM, THEY ARE THE GENTLE SOUL, PROTECTOR AND  
ADVISOR TO JUNIORS AND SENIORS ALIKE.

A GENTLE TOUCH AND A SOFTLY SPOKEN "CHIEFY...CHIEFY...IT'S TIME TO GET  
UP", SHOULD BRING EXCELLENT RESULTS.

# PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

1974-1979

6





*Depart of Defense photo*

1974 USS *Cree* ATF-84. A Boot Chief stands between two "genuine" chief petty officers. CPO pre-initiation events in the 1970s were not always held behind closed doors.

In May 1973, the Navy announced a limited frocking program for CPO selectees. After the August 1972 CPO examinations, the Navy implemented cost avoidance measures that delayed advancements of new chief petty officers until later in 1973. NAVOP 63 announced a pilot frocking program for CPO selectees throughout the Navy<sup>36</sup>. Frocked CPOs were allowed to defer payments for new uniforms. The Navy Resale System Office in Brooklyn N.Y. authorized all Navy Exchanges to offer deferred payment plans for those first class petty officers selected for chief off the August 1972 examination<sup>37</sup>.

In November 1973, the CNO, Adm. Zumwalt, ordered the continuation of the frocking program which included E7, E8, and E9 personnel that were selected during the spring 1973 exam cycle<sup>38</sup>. However, the frocking policy

was revised in 1974 to only allow the frocking of a service member who was actually serving in a billet requiring the higher pay grade.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1971 O-444-144

**TAD TRAVEL ORDER**  
NAVPERS 1021/10 REV. 1-71 (N 814 NS 101)

FROM: COMMANDING OFFICER, USS LUCE (DLG-7) AT NEWPORT, R.I.

TO: BTC Gerald I. SAUCIER, USN  
AND  
NO OTHERS

CLASSIFICATION: U/A

DATE PREPARED: 5 APRIL 1973

ISSUED BY: 6 APRIL 1973

ON OR ABOUT 0000, 6 APRIL 1973 YOU ARE DIRECTED TO REPORT TO THE CPO MESS, USS LUCE (DLG-7) AND CARRY OUT THE ORDERS AS DIRECTED BY THE CPO MESS PRESIDENT.

**CPO INITIATION**

NO EXPENSE TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THE EXECUTION OF THESE ORDERS AND NONE ACHN.

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES AND SUB-HEADS (a)	PROJECT CLASS (b)	AL COAST NUMBER (c)	SHIP/UNIT NUMBER (d)	ASSIGNED AGENTS ACT (e)	TYPE (f)	THIRD NUMBER (g)	START DATE (h)
17 0000	18 0000	19 0000	20 0000	21 0000	22 0000	23 0000	24 0000

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION: U/A

APPROVED SIGNATURE: *[Signature]*

REPORT TO: *6 Apr 1973*  
*Was in CP Mess*  
*Priority to crew in being*  
*directed to 2000 hrs*  
*found that I was not*  
*of my T. I was*  
*out of the mess*

COPY TO: *REPORTED AT 2245-4-5-73 JAMES SA. Reef*

Saucier Collection  
1973 BTC Gerald I. Saucier, USN TAD orders to CPO initiation.

Gerald Saucier was selected for Chief Boiler Technician off the August 1972 advancement examination cycle. Saucier was serving on the USS *Luce* DLG-7 and was frocked along with two other selectees on his ship. All the men immediately moved into CPO quarters, began eating in the CPO mess and wearing chief petty officer uniforms. However, they were not initiated until the day they began to get paid as chief petty officers--which was months away.

In the meantime, they were treated as first class petty

officers and required to knock and request permission in order to enter the CPO mess. They were also required to carry charge books. The officers and crew witnessed many pranks that were played on them outside the CPO mess by the chief petty officers. A common prank involved hiding their shoes or hat forcing them to go to morning quarters wearing an incomplete uniform. On April 6, 1973, they were all initiated while the ship was in port. Their initiation started on the ship but since alcohol was not authorized the initiation moved ashore where alcohol was not prohibited <sup>39</sup>.

## CPO Selection Boards Established

In September 1973, MCPON Whittet announced the establishment of a chief petty officer selection board to convene in June 1974. The board would be comprised of 40 officers and senior enlisted men from every skill area in the Navy--similar to the E8/E9 selection boards. The president of the board would be a captain. The board was expected to convene in June, run for about a month, and report out in early August. Board members were expected to review over 20,000 records. Whittet also announced that in the future, the CPO examination would only be given once a year, in January.

The selection board's main consideration was "on-the-job, day-to-day, year-to-year performance". Other factors to be considered included the "candidate's test score, age, health, awards and decorations, leadership ability, in-service education, off-duty education credits, types and places of duty, administrative ability, discipline record, time in rate, time in service, and over-all potential" <sup>40</sup>.

For the first selection board, there was no requirement to pass the examination. The records of the top 50 percent of all who took the January 1974 CPO examination were reviewed by the selection board. <sup>41</sup>

MCPON Walker relieved MCPON Whittet in September 1975. During his tenure the E7 selection boards were reorganized to be an equal mix of officer and enlisted as voting members <sup>43</sup>.

In 1974, Duane Bushey was selected for chief petty officer by the first CPO selection board. He was assigned to Aircraft Ferry Squadron Thirty One (VRF-31) at Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Va. Under the old selection system, even though Bushey had been CINCPACFLT Shore Sailor of the Year and had routinely scored high on the chief's test he was not selected due to a small number of quotas. His rating, Aviation Electrician's Mate (AE), was over manned and selection for chief was based final multiple--not overall performance. The change to the selection board process resulted in many Sailors, like Bushey, being promoted based primarily on their performance.

Bushey and another Sailor, Don Paine, were the only ones selected for chief in VRF-31. There was no formal training from the time they were notified until the day they were initiated in the CPO club at Naval Station Norfolk. From the time they were notified they were constantly harassed by the squadron chiefs. They were also required to perform personal services such as getting coffee and donuts, picking up laundry and washing and filling their cars up with gas.

Bushey had a charge book that was stolen a few days after he got it. It wasn't returned until a week before initiation. The book had been spit on, ejaculated on, defecated on,

and was full of profanity ridden comments. After initiation he threw the book away.

On the morning of initiation day, Bushey and the other selectee were required to dress up in tutus and ride tricycles while the squadron was at quarters. After quarters they were put in the back of truck and carried off to initiation.

Within an hour of beginning initiation he was drunk. He had been required to chug a pitcher of beer when he arrived and had chugged two more shortly thereafter. By the end of the day he had puked two or three times. When initiation was over there was a pinning ceremony. However, family and friends were not allowed to attend. Bushey recalled that the attitude was

*"your family didn't come with your seabag and had nothing to do with you making chief."*

The new chiefs were given a CPO combination cap and they recited the CPO creed.

Bushey doesn't remember anything more about initiation. At the end of the day, his wife Sue was called to come pick him up at the CPO club. He was passed out drunk. On the way home he threw up in the car and on the front porch of their house. He slept for about 12 hours after he arrived home.

Over 50 new chiefs were initiated that day. Bushey didn't know any of them other than the Sailor from his squadron. There was no interaction with the other selectees before or after initiation day. <sup>42</sup>

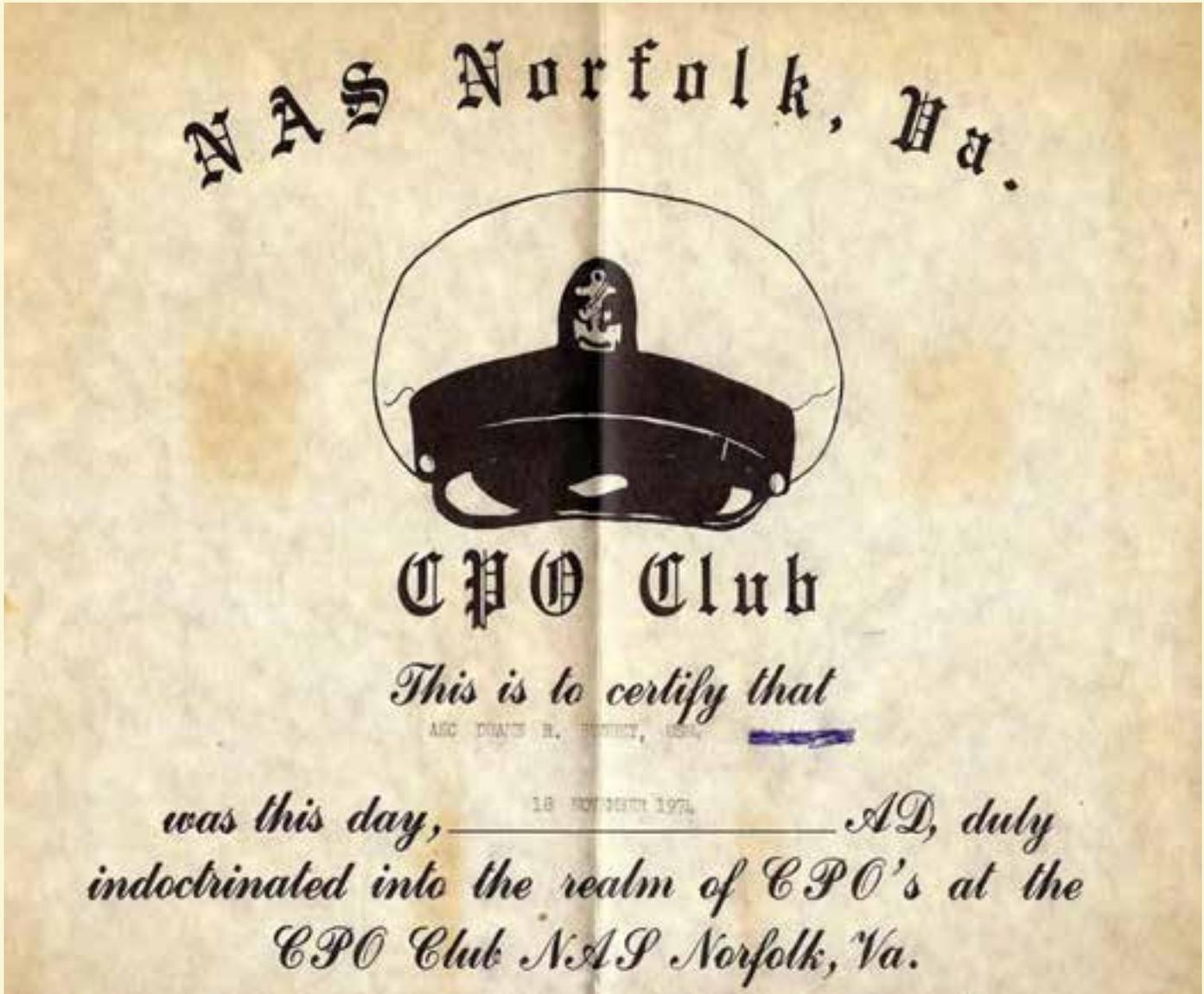


BUSHEY COLLECTION PHOTOGRAPH

November 16, 1974 MCPON Duane Bushey is presented with a "Boot Chief" cap that he was required to wear until he was initiated two days later. Looking on is AOC Don Paine who was also advanced to chief on the same day

# CPO INITIATION 1974

NAS Norfolk, VA



BUSHEY COLLECTION PHOTOGRAPH

Typical CPO Initiation certificate from the mid-1970s. It was customary for newly initiated chief petty officers to be presented with a certificate and a combination cap.



**ANYTHING GOES**  
1980-1990

7



LEUCI collection

BMCM Hart takes his turn as "Judge" during a CPO initiation at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek VA in the 1980s. Note the egg cartons, "truth serum" cups, and delicacies in the metal pan. Those items were generously shared with CPO selectees and their "Defense Attorneys" while standing before the judge.

### CPO initiations 1980s - Nobody Seems to Get It

By 1980, personnel issues that the Navy had initially addressed in the early 1970s were still being managed. Human relations programs were addressing discrimination, race relations, quality of life, and equal opportunity for women. The Navy had also implemented programs to de-glamorize alcohol and tobacco use along with a zero-tolerance policy for illegal drug use. Regulations that prohibited hazing, humiliation, coercion, and unprofessional conduct remained on the books. However, many of the practices associated with CPO initiations, and other traditional ceremonies remained in conflict with Navy Regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

In 1980, ALNAV 42-80 announced that unrestricted frocking was extended to all personnel O6 and below. The requirement to be serving in a billet requiring the higher pay grade was eliminated. The E7 selection boards, active and reserve, met in the summer. The results were generally released during July and all the personnel selected were promoted, or frocked, in September.

Beginning in the fall of 1980, after the chief selection board results were released, the first "CPO Season" began. Most CPO selectees were assigned a sponsor and given a charge book. The sponsor either volunteered or was appointed by the command master chief. The sponsor's task was to provide support and guidance to the CPO-selectee during

events and evolutions that would take place prior to and on CPO initiation day. There was little, if any, formal interaction between the CPO mess and the CPO selectee's spouse.

The CPO season of the 1980s did not involve any formal training to prepare the selectees for advancement to chief petty officer. During the weeks before initiation, selectees were required to carry their charge books and present them to every chief within their command. The chief petty officers would sign the book often leaving a comment or charge for the judge about a flaw in the selectee's behavior that would result in a fine on initiation day. CPO selectees were often tasked to provide personal services for genuine chiefs such as serving breakfast and shining shoes.

CPO selectees were often given a "shopping list" of things they were required to bring to initiation. The list contained items such as food, drinks (alcohol and non-alcohol) and cigars for use and consumption by the genuine chiefs. The shopping list also contained items such as raw eggs, hot sauce, whipped cream, condoms, sanitary napkins, ice, and sheets of plastic for use and consumption by the boot chiefs. Selectees were generally required to bring some cash (usually \$100 in new consecutive bills) along with a blank check to pay their fines. Most of the money was usually returned to the new chief after initiation. The money that wasn't returned was used to help pay some of the initiation costs.

During the early 1980s many CPO initiation activities



## Senior Enlisted Leadership Continues to Grow 1980s

By 1980, the senior enlisted leadership of the Navy was becoming more diverse and professional. The Senior Enlisted Academy opened in 1981. The Command Master Chief Program was firmly established and actively engaged in implementing Navy policy. The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy was now an advisor to the Chief of Naval Operations and the unquestioned leader of enlisted Sailors.

However, the same unauthorized and unsafe activities that took place in CPO initiations during the 1960s and 70s were still occurring. There was still resistance to any change in CPO initiations from many chief petty officers who had entered the Navy in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The most serious issue related to CPO initiations was drunkenness. Every year there were alcohol related injuries and deaths attributed to CPO initiations. Navy senior enlisted leaders often had trouble controlling events at CPO initiations because of the strong sentiments of some chief petty officers fueled by alcohol. Many felt that any changes such as banning alcohol consumption, eliminating lewd, pointless, unsafe, and humiliating practices was a break with Navy tradition.



The current Command Master Chief badge was adopted during MCPON Walker's tenure. Walker had the badge redesigned because he "was tired of being mistaken as a career counselor" who wore a badge similar to the Senior Enlisted Leader badge adopted in 1971.



Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph

MCPON Tom Crow stands with Senior Enlisted Leadership at the Fleet and Force Master Chief Conference 1982. During the following decades, Navy Senior Enlisted Leadership continued to expand and become more diverse.

Len Joslyn was selected for Chief Radioman in 1983. Len was serving on USS *McInerney* FFG-8 and was notified in July via naval message of his selection. He and another *McInerney* Sailor were selected. During the weeks before initiation the CPO mess kept them busy. Joslyn was given a charge book with specific instructions on how to number the pages and to reserve a special page for the command master chief. He attached a chain to the book in order to carry it. There was no formal training during the time leading up to initiation. However, there were plenty of “activities/fun and games” that took place in the CPO mess. Most of the activities took place out of sight of the crew. However, Joslyn recalled:

*“...I had to trace my hands onto a file folder, cut them out, put them in my charge book, and present them when directed. A chief would then yell “all hands on deck” and throw the hands onto the deck. I had to place my hands on the cardboard hands in whatever position that put me in. There were numerous other ‘fun and games’ activities. None of them caused me any injury or embarrassment in front of other crew members.”*

USS *McInerney* was tied up in Mayport on initiation day. On that day his division officer, Ensign O’Connell, was his “defense attorney”--and he wasn’t successful. After initiation there was a pinning ceremony. He did not receive a plaque or anything else from the CPO mess. Len was promoted in the first increment in September 1983. He has fond memories of his initiation stating:

*“I gave as good as I got from the time I was notified until my anchors were pinned on. I never fully understood the intent of it all until I heard the creed read at my pinning ceremony. I have been retired now for 26 years and I still read the creed from time to time. It helps me keep an even keel in my everyday life. My Navy days were indeed the best years of my life. <sup>44</sup>”*



## CPO INITIATIONS 1980s

Initiations prior to 1995 had little training value and were mainly entertainment for the “genuine” chief petty officers. Raw eggs, alcohol, and “truth serum” were consumed and or worn by CPO selectees and any officers who attempted to “practice law” as defense attorneys. Cigars were popular with CPOs observing the festivities.





By the mid-1980s chief petty officer initiations had adopted many of the characteristics of “Crossing the Line” (equator) ceremonies that included favorite props such as stocks and ice-filled coffins. The consumption of food and liquids, both good and not so good, by CPO selectees was the norm. Cross-dressing and crude behavior were entertainment for all who were present. The humor, hardships, and humiliations experienced during chief petty officer initiations formed a common bond between all CPOs.



RMCS XJL Photographs  
Chief initiation events at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va. CPO Club 1988

NOV 11 1988

## MCPON Placket - The Buck Stops Here

William Plackett served as MCPON from 1985 through 1988. Plackett's approach was to begin holding Command Master Chiefs and other senior enlisted leaders personally accountable for activities associated with CPO initiations within their command.

During his tenure, MCPON Plackett emphasized professional and academic education as a means to re-mold the senior enlisted structure of the Navy. It was during this time that the CPO Indoctrination Course was established. The course was required to be completed before a CPO selectee could be promoted or frocked.

He was instrumental in gaining support to permanently fund the Senior Enlisted Academy. He also worked to solidify and expand the Command Master Chief program which had come into question by some senior flag officers.

Elizabeth E. Shoemaker (Krickit) was selected for Chief Engineman (ENC) in 1983. She was the first female ENC in the Navy and later became the first female LDO in the Submarine Repair field. She was notified of her selection by the LDO detailer. Two months after being notified she was frocked and went through initiation with 16 men and one other female. During the weeks leading up to initiation she carried a charge book which was stolen and later returned drilled full of holes. The charge book was replaced and was eventually filled with charges and comments for the judge on initiation day.

There was no fund raising at that time. Shoemaker was required to bring \$200, in one-dollar bills, to initiation--of which most was returned to her. The money not returned went towards the cost of initiation. She received an engraved pen and pencil set to remember the day. There was a pinning ceremony during her initiation. A second ceremony was held after the initiation with family members present.

Shoemaker recalls that her CPO initiation was a rite of passage but really didn't do anything to prepare her to be a better leader or a chief petty officer. Most of her leadership skills had been learned during her time prior to being selected for chief.

ENC Shoemaker was selected for LDO in 1984. However, she eventually reverted back to enlisted status as an ENCS and retired as a senior chief <sup>45</sup>.



*Leuci Collection*

Pinning Ceremonies after initiation that were open to family members and the crew became the norm by the mid-1980s.

BTCS Tom Dandes enlisted in the Navy in 1976. Tom's first recollection of CPO initiations occurred on his first ship USS Lynde McCormick DDG-8. He witnessed CPO selectees carrying charge books and being harassed by chief petty officers. It wasn't uncommon in those days for a CPO selectee's charge book to go missing and eventually get returned after members of the crew, who were not chiefs, signed it.

Tom was selected for chief in July 1985 while on a Western Pacific deployment aboard USS *Horne* CG-30. There were 12 Sailors selected for chief aboard USS *Horne*. They were notified of their selection when an announcement was made over the ship's general announcement system (1MC) directing them to report to the Chiefs' Mess. Upon arriving outside the mess they were taken in one at a time and briefed on the rules for entering the mess along with rules relating to their charge books.

Over the following weeks they carried charge books. Their charge books were Navy legal size record books. A chain and shackle were attached to the book. The links of the chain were painted red, white, and blue. The pages were numbered. Every chief on the ship had a reserved page based on his seniority. The charge books were carried everywhere except when they were on watch or in a situation where the book was a safety hazard.

During the weeks leading up to initiation there was no professional or formal training. The CPO selectees were required to clean the CPO mess every day. They also provided entertainment in the mess for the genuine chiefs. They sang songs and performed skits. When they ate in the mess they were required to sit in a row on the deck.

Prior to initiation day, USS *Horne* pulled into the Philippines for a port call. The CPO selectees were able to go ashore to purchase CPO uniforms. They were in competition with all the other CPO selectees from other ships for the limited number of uniforms in the Navy Exchange. Before leaving port, the selectees were given a shopping list of provisions to procure which included balut (a Philippine delicacy), for use on initiation day.

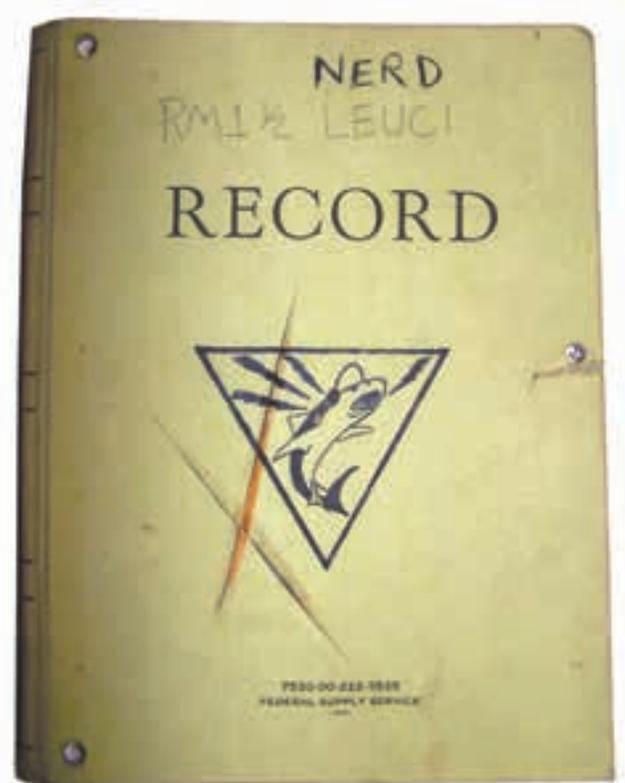
On initiation day the ship was underway. Tom's division officer, an Ensign, acted as his defense attorney. The Ensign was not an effective attorney and Tom was found guilty on every charge. At the end of initiation there was a pinning ceremony.

Tom recalled that the best thing that came out of his initiation was the interaction with other chiefs who he normally had no contact with. He also developed a bond between his fellow selectees and the genuine chiefs in the mess. He didn't realize at the time that his initiation was mild compared to the ones he would later witness ashore.

Over the next few years, he attended CPO initiations

ashore at CPO clubs and Veteran of Foreign Wars (VFW) establishments. Alcohol changed the behavior of many of the genuine chiefs. He recalled that many initiations ashore turned into "a giant college frat party" where people were getting hurt. Often fights would break out between chief petty officers who were drunk. After one of the last CPO initiations he attended before he retired a genuine chief was involved in a car wreck. The chief was killed along with the people in the car he struck head-on. He was driving home drunk and going the wrong way on the interstate highway.

Dandes retired from the Navy in 1998 as a Senior Chief Boiler Technician <sup>46</sup>.



*Leuci Collection*

Charge books of the 1980s were not the elaborate keepsakes that would be seen in later decades. The typical CPO charge book was usually a Record book obtained from the Navy Supply System. They were not kept in ornate boxes or "vessels" as they are today. Many charge books from the 1980s and early 90s were thrown away after initiation due to lewd comments and other material put into the book by "genuine" chiefs.



**FIX IT OR LOSE IT**  
1991-1999

8

## MCPON Bushey - CPO Initiations Nearly Eliminated

Every MCPON, starting with Plackett through Scott, was confronted with concerns about, or actual orders to end CPO initiations from the Chief of Naval Operations. Discussions to eliminate CPO initiations were generally kept out of the media and were not common knowledge within the fleet.

Duane Bushey served as MCPON from 1988 through 1992. Shortly after he took office in the fall of 1988, CPO initiations were held throughout the fleet. There were the usual reports of alcohol related incidents. However, there were also reports of lewd, crude, and disgusting behavior relating to some CPO initiations that were made directly to the CNO by members of congress. One of the most egregious complaints related to an incident in Groton that resulted in several recently initiated CPOs coming down with throat infections that were inadvertently spread to their family members. The cause of the infection was traced to unsanitary conditions during the CPO initiation as a result of a lewd event forced upon several CPO selectees.

MCPON Bushey was called into the CNO's office. Adm. Trost informed him that he was going to end CPO initiations. However, Bushey was able to present a plan to reform initiations that the CNO accepted. The first step in reforming initiations was to enforce existing regulations that banned any selectee being forced to eat or drink anything, or to perform any acts against their will. However, the main reform was to ban the consumption of alcohol by selectees during the event. Command Master Chiefs were also to be held accountable for ensuring initiations did not violate Navy Regulations. The reforms were not popular among all CPO messes. Even though some CPO messes were slow to accept or simply ignored the MCPON's guidance, the reforms had begun.

A few years later, MCPON Hagan faced the elimination of CPO initiations from two CNOs. Admiral Kelso and later Admiral Borda came very close to eliminating CPO initiations replacing it with just a pinning ceremony. Hagan, like Bushey, was able to work out a compromise, by continuing reforms and changes that saved CPO initiations from elimination <sup>48</sup>.

Over the following years reforms continued. There were still events, like "Tailhook" in 1991, that highlighted unprofessional activities and behavior associated with Navy ceremonies, including CPO initiations. Scandals relating to other "traditional" ceremonies such as Crossing the Equator, Tacking on Crows, and "Blood" pinnings, kept the pressure on to reform Chief Initiations or they would be eliminated.



*Depart of Defense photo*

1990 MCPON Bushey presents a flag to CNO Carlise Trost during his retirement and change of command with Admiral Frank Kelso. CNO Trost wanted to eliminate CPO initiations in the fall of 1988. Bushey was able to present a plan to reform chief initiations that the CNO accepted which saved them from becoming extinct.



*Depart of Defense photo*

Duane Bushey issued annual written guidance to CPO messes covering the "Do's and Dont's" for CPO initiations during his tenure as MCPON. MCPON guidance is still issued today.

Mike House was selected for Chief Radioman in July 1988 while deployed aboard USS *Milwaukee* AOR-2. He was notified when the captain made the announcement over the ship's 1MC. House and two others were selected for chief. The three were immediately ordered to report to the CPO Mess. Upon arrival they were given some special drinks--a concoction made by the Chief Mess Management Specialist.

Over the next few weeks they learned songs and skits to perform in the mess. They also competed in egg races nearly every night for the entertainment of the genuine chiefs and were tasked to serve coffee on demand for the chiefs in the mess. They all had charge books. Since House was a Radioman, he had a UHF antenna attached to his book.

Most of the activities were confined to the mess and out of sight of the crew. However, on one occasion they performed songs for the crew dressed as "The Supremes."

There was no fund-raising. On initiation day they were required to report with a hundred dollar bills with consecutive serial numbers. After initiation they were refunded most of their money. House recalled his initiation as being :

*"...very, very demanding, but I never, ever, encountered anything that was as intense, pressure packed learning and challenging as that CPO initiation. It was the best thing that happened to me and I will always remember it in a positive light. It helped me endure and succeed under very challenging times during follow-on commands. Were some things that could have been toned down? Probably..."<sup>49</sup>*



Leuci Collection  
1976 USS *Guam* LPH-9. Activities and behavior associated with traditional Navy ceremonies, such as crossing the equator, came under scrutiny in the 1990s.



Leuci Collection  
1976 USS *Guam* LPH-9. Eating from a trough was popular in both CPO Initiations and "Crossing the Line" (equator) ceremonies.

## 1990s The New Season begins

Even though reforms were in place, change was slow to occur. Alcohol use, hazing, and harassment associated with CPO initiations began to diminish but was not entirely eliminated. There were many chief petty officers that opposed any changes or watering down of CPO initiations. There were reports that some CPO messes offered “traditional” initiations to interested selectees that were not sanctioned by the Navy and were held off-base.

In 1991, the Navy was rocked by the Tailhook scandal. The abuse of alcohol and highly inappropriate behavior associated with Tailhook tarnished the image of the U.S. Navy. Tailhook had an indirect effect on CPO initiations resulting in the continuation of reforms and to make CPO initiations more professional.

In June 1991, MCPON Bushey released his third letter to the senior enlisted leadership concerning initiations<sup>50</sup>. The letter emphasized the responsibility that all chief petty officers had to ensure that indoctrination and initiation activities were in compliance with “all Navy directives, instructions and policies regarding equal opportunity, sexual harassment and Navy rights and responsibilities were strictly adhered to.” The letter contained enclosures developed by the Fleet/Force Master Chiefs during the spring 1991 CNO Advisory Panel. The enclosures were guidelines for the CPO Pinning Ceremony and 1991 CPO Initiation.

The 1991 CPO initiation guidance reiterated that the overall responsibility for initiation activities lay with the Command Master, Senior or Command Chief. The guidance stressed that no pre-initiation activities would take place within the view of junior personnel or officers. Every selectee was to have a trained sponsor, and that harassment would not be tolerated. Charge books were to be professional in appearance and vulgar inscriptions were prohibited. Furthermore, “the oral passing of any object or substance between selectees or initiates” was forbidden along with any initiation props that were unsafe or in bad taste.

The MCPON's guidance was a step forward in improving the quality of CPO initiations. The majority of CPO messes followed the spirit of the guidance. However, there were numerous cases where the guidance was misinterpreted or ignored. Even though alcohol consumption was forbidden for selectees it was still free-flowing for the CPOs who attended initiation ceremonies.



*Depart of Defense photo*  
1991 MCPON Bushey continued reforming CPO initiations during Desert Storm and the aftermath of Tailhook '91.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO  
11 JUN 1991

From: Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy  
To: Command Master Chiefs, Command Senior Chiefs, Command  
Chiefs and Navy Chief Petty Officers

Subj: CHIEF PETTY OFFICER (CPO) INITIATION/INDOCTRINATION CYCLE

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5354.1B Equal Opportunity  
(b) OPNAVINST 5370.2 Fraternization  
(c) OPNAVINST 5300.9 Sexual Harassment  
(d) CPO Creed

Encl: (1) CPO Pinning Ceremony Guidance  
(2) Statement From Fleet/Force Master Chiefs

1. Fellow Chief Petty Officers, this is my third letter to you concerning initiations. All previous letters, packages and guidance are still in effect.

2. The overall responsibility for planning, organizing and conducting the indoctrination and initiation activities of our new CPOs rests squarely on the shoulders of the Command Master, Senior, or Chief Petty Officer. Each of you personally, and the CPO community collectively, is also responsible for ensuring that all Navy directives, instructions and policies regarding equal opportunity, sexual harassment and Navy rights and responsibilities are strictly adhered to. The CPO Creed contains the principles that we, as CPOs, live by, and must govern our every action. This is especially true as we prepare to welcome new CPOs into our fraternity.

3. Prior to beginning this year's indoctrination and initiation activities, review references (a) through (d) as a mess. Also review as a mess enclosures (1) and (2). You will notice some guideline changes in enclosure (2) which are necessary if we are to preserve CPO initiations. These guidelines were developed by the Fleet/Force Master Chiefs during our Spring CNO Advisory Panel and are the result of years of experience and foresight.

4. Using these guidelines and your good judgement, our initiations will be conducted in an exemplary manner, in keeping with our Navy principles of integrity, professionalism and tradition. With your cooperation and our core values in mind, I am certain that we can make all initiations a meaningful experience for all new CPOs and a credit to THE CHIEF'S COMMUNITY.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature, possibly "C", is located below the closing text.

**CPO PINNING ON OF  
COLLAR DEVICES CEREMONY**

1. Assign an experienced Chief, Senior Chief or Master Chief, with the sole responsibility of organizing and directing the pinning ceremony.

2. INPORT: Ensure all guest are properly received at the entrance, of course, you have pre-briefed them on what to expect on initiation day, but a reminder would not hurt. A small token of appreciation at this time wouldn't hurt, i.e. flowers, CPO wife/husband T-shirt, CPO pin etc. use some creativity.

3. At SEA, try to have every chief and officer, not on essential watch, present for the pinning and reading of the creed. Make a video for the family if possible. Some commands repeat the pinning ceremony for families if they are returning to port shortly after the initiation.

4. Make the pinning/ceremony very special, put a lot of thought to it's planning. It is absolutely essential that each new CPO gets an individual picture of their pinning. Listed are a few idea's we would like to share:

- Ensure family members are seated where they can see the entire ceremony.

- Have red carpet, bullets, and side boys in place. Announce each new CPO arriving, present honors. The pinners can be in place at the end of the side boys to put on the collar devices and the photographer will capture the moment. Good time to present CPO covers.

- Give special recognition to the spouses present. Many commands have the spouses stand beside there new chief for the reading of the creed.

- Certificates of advancement, frocking may be done at this time if not done prior to initiation.

- Special presentation should now be made, i.e. plaques, free dinner for two at the CPO club, free tickets for the CPO Ball coming up soon.

- It is absolutely essential that each new chief get a copy of the CPO creed. It should either be framed, etched on a plaque, or prepared on good parchment. The chief should hold the creed, follow along as it is read by the CMC or the senior enlisted present.

5. The above are just the bare minimum. If you have a good idea, pass it on, ensure this is a special day, special moment, that won't be forgotten.

Encl (1)



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON DC 20350 2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

**MEMORANDUM FOR ALL COMMAND MASTER CHIEFS/SENIOR CHIEFS/CHIEFS**

**From: Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy**

**Subj: 1991 CPO INITIATION GUIDELINES**

**1. STATEMENT FROM FLEET/FORCE MASTER CHIEFS:**

" CHIEF PETTY OFFICER INITIATIONS ARE A TIME-HONORED TRADITION INTENDED TO HAVE A POSITIVE AND LASTING AFFECT ON OUR NEW CHIEFS. COMMAND MASTER CHIEFS ARE EXPECTED TO ADD QUALITY FUNCTIONS AND ITEMS SUCH AS PIPING ABOARD CEREMONIES, KHAKI BALLS, LUNCHEONS ETC. UTILIZATION OF CORPORATE KNOWLEDGE FROM SQUADRON, GROUP AND FLEET/FORCE MASTER CHIEFS IS ENCOURAGED. COMMAND MASTER CHIEFS WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR CPO INITIATIONS WITHIN THEIR COMMANDS. THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE INTENDED TO ASSIST CHIEFS IN ENSURING THAT ALL SELECTEES ARE AFFORDED THE SAME OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCCESS AND SAFETY."

**2. PRE-INITIATION EVENTS:**

- ALL CURRENT NAVY INSTRUCTIONS, DIRECTIVES AND POLICIES CONCERNING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND PRIDE AND PROFESSIONALISM WILL BE ADHERED TOO.
- PRE-INITIATION ACTIVITIES WILL BE IN GOOD TASTE AND WILL BE CONFINED TO THE CPO COMMUNITY. SELECTEES WILL NOT BE DEALT WITH-IN THE VIEW OF JUNIOR PERSONNEL OR DURING THEIR OFF-SHIP NON-DUTY HOURS AND WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH ASSIGNED DUTIES OR RESPONSIBILITIES.
- COMMAND MASTER, SENIOR OR COMMAND CHIEF WILL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CPO SELECTEES AND WILL ENSURE THAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER IS KEPT INFORMED CONCERNING ALL EVENTS.

**2. PRIOR TO THE CPO SELECTION LIST BEING PUBLISHED, CMC SHOULD:**

- SELECT RESPECTIVE SPONSOR.
- TRAIN SPONSORS ON HOW TO GUIDE SELECTEE THRU INITIATION PROCESS
- TRAIN SPONSORS ON WHAT TO LOOK FOR (IE: THINGS SUCH AS TOO MUCH HARASSMENT).
- BRIEF SPONSORS ON HOW TO STOP THE HARASSMENT IF IT GOES TO FAR.
- SELECT CPO INDOC TRAINING TEAM AND TRAIN THE INSTRUCTORS.

**3. AFTER SELECTION LIST IS PUBLISHED THE CMC SHOULD:**

- INTERVIEW THE SELECTEE.
- INTRODUCE THE SLECTEE TO SPONSOR.
- INDOC WIVES, OR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS AS TO THE PROCESS WITHOUT GOING INTO THE EXACT DETAILS.
- MONITOR PROCESS - "DON'T LET THINGS GET OUT OF CONTROL!"

Enclosure (2)

4. THE TRAINING PROCESS FOR SONGS, SKITS, ROUTINES AND OTHER PQS ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE STARTED UNTIL 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE INITIATION DATE.
  - KEEP THE TRAINING CONFINED TO CPO MESS, QUARTERS OR CPO CONTROLLED SPACES.
  - DON'T LET CPO TRAINING SPILL OVER INTO WORK SPACES OR WHERE THE REST OF THE CREW IS INVOLVED (IE: WHERE MESSCOOKS ARE PRESENT).
  - KEEP THE TRAINING PROCESS CONFINED TO NON WORKING HOURS. BUT NOT TO EXTEND THE WORK DAY (IE: MEAL HOURS, DUTY DAYS).
  - CHARGE BOOKS WILL BE PROFESSIONAL IN APPEARANCE AND WILL NOT BE ATTACHED TO CHAINS, OR OTHER ITEMS TO DRAW ATTENTIONS.  
MANY SELECTEES WILL PRESERVE THESE BOOKS AS SOUVENIRS, VULGAR WRITING WILL BE PROHIBITED. CHARGE BOOKS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WILL BE CONFINED TO THE CPO COMMUNITY.
  
5. INITIATION EVENTS:
  - ALL MEMBERS OF THE COURT WILL BE BRIEFED CONCERNING THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES.
  - EACH SELECTEE WILL BE MEDICALLY MONITORED DURING THE ACTUAL INITIATION EVENTS.
  - THERE WILL BE NO ORAL PASSING OF ANY OBJECT OR SUBSTANCE BETWEEN SELECTEES OR INITIATES.
  - ALL PROPS USED WILL BE CHECKED TO ENSURE SAFETY TO THE SELECTEE. ANY PROP SUSPECTED OF BEING IN BAD TASTE OR UNSAFE WILL NOT BE USED.
  
6. CEREMONIAL GUIDANCE:
  - ALL CPO'S HAVE EXPERIENCED THE CPO INITIATION AND HAVE SEEN THE RESULTS OF BOTH GOOD AND BAD CEREMONIES. WE MUST GIVE OUR SELECTEES THE BEST CEREMONY POSSIBLE.
  - READING OF THE CREED WILL BE DONE WITH DIGNITY BY THE MASTER CHIEF, SENIOR OR COMMAND CHIEF AS THE FINAL EVENT PRIOR TO PINNING THE NEW CPO.
  - PINNING WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SPOUSE AND COMMANDING OFFICER OR OTHER INDIVIDUAL AS INDICATED BY THE SELECTEE.
  - THE CPO INITIATION IS FOR CPO'S. EXCEPT FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER, THE AUDIENCE WILL BE LIMITED TO CPO'S AND RETIRED CPO'S. IF A LIMITED NUMBER OF OFFICER'S (LDO'S/CWO'S) ARE INVITED, THEY SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIONS OF THE INITIATION.
  - CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT HAS BEEN MADE IN THE QUALITY OF CPO INITIATIONS IN RECENT YEARS. ALL CHIEFS CAN TAKE PRIDE IN THIS FACT. WE ARE STEERING THE RIGHT COURSE. WITH THIS IN MIND, THESE THOUGHTS AND GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN OFFERED TO CONTINUE OUR PROGRESS IN ENSUING THE HIGHEST OF STANDARDS.

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*CPO Indoctrination:*

## Naval Heritage/Core Values Assignment Worksheet

### TO THE CPO SELECTEE:

Our Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment were officially adopted by the Navy on 9 October 1992. Although those three words were formally adopted to summarize and symbolize the values that must govern all we do only recently, they have been displayed time and again by Sailors throughout our history. It is that history and the demonstration of these core values, most impressively in very trying, dangerous and even hopeless circumstances, that have given the our Navy the proud heritage we share and strive to uphold today.

As well as these three words describe our core values, you should recognize they are only a symbolic summary of the many values and traits which constitute the character of a Sailor. For instance, **HONOR** involves the *demonstration of fidelity, respect, honesty, responsibility and integrity*; **COURAGE** has elements of *loyalty, patriotism, valor, sacrifice, purposefulness and conviction*; and **COMMITMENT** encompasses *competence, teamwork, reliability, self discipline, sacrifice, tenacity, perseverance, concern and respect*.

### ASSIGNMENT:

1. Each CPO selectee will read at least one book from the Naval Heritage Reading List. (Selectees will be assigned a title to read by the Command Master Chief/Chief of the Boat who will ensure several different titles are read to provide a broad base for formal discussions in the course curriculum).
2. On a list of our core values are listed a subset of elements, traits, or actions that comprise each individual value (use the list in paragraph two, above, as a starting point). The CPO selectee is to read being particularly responsive to these instances which illustrate the elements of the core values noting the occurrence for future discussion. **KEEPING FORMAL NOTES SUFFICIENT TO PREPARE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION PERIOD SCHEDULED DURING CPO INDOCTRINATION COURSE IS REQUIRED.** While reading, for example, note page numbers for future reference on page 2 of the worksheet or keep narrative notes.
3. The CPO selectee will be prepared to discuss, at a date to be determined by the CPO Indoctrination Coordinator and in a seminar format with other CPO selectees, each of the elements of the core values, drawing from and discussing those actions supporting or not supporting each element from the selected reading. In preparation for this discussion, the selectee shall keep notes on the assigned reading and using a good quality dictionary, thesaurus and other suitable reference sources shall become familiar with the conventional definitions of our Core Values and the other involved elements partially listed in italics in paragraph two (above) of this worksheet.
4. The goal of this exercise is to relate the demonstration of core values in today's Navy with the way core values were demonstrated throughout our heritage and how they contributed to success in the face of challenge.

## United States Navy Chief Petty Officer Creed

During the course of this day you have been caused to humbly accept challenge and face adversity. This you have accomplished with rare good grace. Pointless as some of these challenges may have seemed, there were valid, time-honored reasons behind each pointed barb. It was necessary to meet these hurdles with blind faith in the fellowship of Chief Petty Officers. The goal was to instill in you that trust is inherent with the donning of the uniform of a Chief.

It was our intent to impress upon you that challenge is good; a great and necessary reality which cannot mar you - which, in fact, strengthens you. In your future as a Chief Petty Officer., you will be forced to endure adversity far beyond that imposed upon you today. You must face each challenge and adversity with the same dignity and good grace you demonstrated today.

By experience, by performance, and by testing, you have been this day advanced to Chief Petty Officer. In the United States Navy - and only in the United States Navy - the rank of E7 carries with it unique responsibilities and privileges you are now bound to observe and expected to fulfill.

Your entire way of life is now changed. More will be expected of you; more will be demanded of you. Not because you are a E7 but because you are now a Chief Petty Officer. You have not merely been promoted one paygrade, you have joined an exclusive fellowship and, as in all fellowships, you have a special responsibility to your comrades, even as they have a special responsibility to you. This is why we in the United States Navy may maintain with pride our feelings of accomplishment once we have attained the position of Chief Petty Officer.

Your new responsibilities and privileges do not appear in print. They have no official standing; they cannot be referred to by name, number, nor file. They have existed for over 100 years, Chiefs before you have freely accepted responsibility beyond the call of printed assignment. Their actions and their performance demanded the respect of their seniors as well as their juniors.

It is now required that you be the fountain of wisdom, the ambassador of good will, the authority in personal relations as well as in technical applications. "Ask the Chief" is a household phrase in and out of the Navy. You are now the Chief.

The exalted position you have now achieved - and the word exalted is used advisedly - exists because of the attitude and performance of the Chiefs before you. It shall exist only as long as you and your fellow Chiefs maintain these standards.

It was our intention that you never forget this day. It was our intention to test you, to try you, and to accept you. Your performance has assured us that you will wear "the hat" with the same pride as your comrades in arms before you.

We take a deep and sincere pleasure in clasping your hand, and accepting you as a Chief Petty officer in the United States Navy.

## MCPON Hagan - Change or Be Eliminated

Master Chief Electrician's Mate (ETCM (SS)) John Hagan relieved MCPON Bushey in the fall of 1992. Hagan served as MCPON for over five years. MCPON Hagan continued the work of previous MCPONs in reforming and improving the quality CPO initiations. During his tenure, Hagan introduced a renewed emphasis on naval history and heritage in the CPO Indoctrination Course. CPO selectees were also expected to participate in physical fitness training and be involved in civic and community events. It was during Hagan's tenure that "CPO Season" began to be used to describe the activities that took place between the time CPO selection results were released and the day of initiation.

Hagan also stressed that charge books were to reflect CPO pride in appearance and by the written entries made by chief petty officers. During this time CPO selectees were required to learn and sing "Anchors Aweigh" and to be able to recite the "Sailor's Creed". Hagan stressed the importance of naval history and heritage. He pushed to end meaningless, demeaning, and unprofessional practices associated with CPO initiations. He recognized that

*"traditions are not values and should be discarded when they no longer served a meaningful purpose."*<sup>51</sup>

By the mid-1990s the CPO Season was quickly becoming more than a simple rite of passage. The season was transitioning to a team-building and professional training activity while still retaining the fun and mystique. By 1996, alcohol had been banned at all CPO initiation events for both the selectees and the initiates. For the first time CPO initiations were being held while everyone was sober.

The CPO season changed pre-initiation activities from individual activities to team-building events. CPO Associations made up of chiefs from various messes within a command or station had come into being. It became common practice to merge CPO selectees into groups in the weeks prior to initiation day. CPO selectees learned to work as a team instead of individuals. In the past, there was often little interaction between selectees from different commands. By the late 1990s, CPO selectees were learning to work with others to accomplish the mission. During Hagan's term, the CPO Creed was updated to reflect the changes in demographics that had occurred within the Navy over the previous 20 years. Navy chiefs had become more diverse. The CPO creed was changed to remove references to gender and humiliation. Some of the changes included modifying the original opening sentence from:

"During the course of this day, you have been caused to suffer indignities, to experience humiliations" to "During the course of this day you have been caused to humbly accept

challenge and face adversity." The sentence "you have joined an exclusive fraternity, and as in all fraternities, you have a responsibility to your brothers, even as they have a responsibility to you" was changed to "you have joined an exclusive fellowship and, as in all fellowships, you have a special responsibility to your comrades, even as they have a special responsibility to you."

The changes to the CPO Creed resulted in predictable reactions from some chief petty officers. Many of the older chiefs and retired chiefs saw it as a break with tradition while others viewed it as a long overdue improvement.

By the turn-of-the 20th century the role of the chief petty officer had evolved. More was expected. It was no longer satisfactory for a chief petty officer to simply be a technical expert. Long gone were the days where superior technical ability would allow personal flaws and unprofessional behavior to be ignored. Chief petty officers were expected to be leaders by example. The senior enlisted leadership structure of the Navy had matured and was providing oversight on all matters relating to CPO initiations.



Depart of Defense photo

John Hagan served as MCPON from 1992-1998. During his tenure he continued to implement reforms to CPO initiations in order to save them from being eliminated by the Chief of Naval Operations.

Mike Stevens found out he made chief when he received a phone call from his Division Chief Bill Krig in July 1995 while assigned to HM-14 in Norfolk Va. Six other men were also selected--no women. Most of their

*“training consisted of reciting ditties, singing songs, eating various concoctions of “food,” and entertaining the CPO mess by seeing how long we could keep the contents of our stomachs down.”*

They were also required to complete the formal CPO Indoctrination class, in order to be frocked on 16 September. Stevens recalled the most meaningful training he received

*“was the one-on-one discussions I had with my sponsor, AECS Jeff Lamb. His mentorship and friendship was the single most important aspect of my CPO initiation training.”*

The other “training” provided little in the way of professional education and was often simply a harsh and humiliating experience. However, it was also a team building process that forged a bond among the selectees and with all other “genuine” chiefs who went through CPO initiation.

The selectees carried charge books. They didn't do any fundraising. After initiation there was a simple pinning ceremony where each new chief received a plaque and an “Initiated and Proud” card.



Stevens Collection  
1995 Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Mike Stevens receives a plaque at his CPO pinning ceremony.

## MCPON Adjusts Course of CPO Initiation

By JO2 Jerry Knaak

The United States Navy has amassed many proud stories since its inception 221 years ago. Stories of heroism and courage contribute to the rich heritage of the greatest navy ever to sail the seven seas. Along the way, several traditions and ceremonies have been woven together to form the fabric of that heritage. One tradition laden with ceremony recalls the legacy of those who have sailed before us—the Chief Petty Officer (CPO) initiation.

Traditions must evolve to keep pace with a rapidly changing society and world climate, and CPO initiation is no exception. The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON), Master Chief Electronics Technician (Surface Warfare) John Hagan, has been instrumental in not only updating the CPO initiation, but bringing naval heritage to the forefront and integrating it into the initiation process. “The major thrust this year is to get the chief selectees to read about their history and heritage. I am really pleased at the thought of the entire chief's mess becoming, over a period of time, more familiar with our naval heritage and the contributions our predecessors made to our nation,” the MCPON said.

A significant reason behind integrating naval heritage into the CPO initiation process is to directly relate and demonstrate how that heritage pertains to the Navy's core values of honor, commitment and courage. “Everything we do needs to be consistent with and strengthen our knowledge and

Hagan stated.

As recently as 10 years ago, a formal core values training program did not exist. Incidents in recent years that cast a negative light on the Navy caused our leadership to clarify and define the values each Sailor and officer should share. “I was initially frustrated that we omitted tradition from our core values. Then I realized that tradition is not a value. Tradition is that part of our history that we preserve ceremonially. I don't object to tradition being left off our list of core values, but I do object to anyone thinking that tradition is not important. It is the perspective in which our core values have meaning,” Hagan explained.

The May-June 1996 issue of *Direct Line*, the MCPON's newsletter for the senior enlisted community, provides guidance for force and command master chiefs on what the CPO initiation process should encompass. It recommends specific activities that enhance both a CPO's and a selectee's understanding of the Navy's core values:

- Selectee physical fitness training.
- CPO Indoctrination Course, including naval heritage reading assignments.
- Charge books (handcrafted



MCPON John Hagan describes naval heritage reading as a tradition process to JO2 Jerry Knaak.

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NAVAL AVIATION NEWS JULY-AUGUST 1996

MCPON John Hagan introduced reforms to CPO initiations in the mid-1990s that were not popular with many “old-school” chief petty officers. However, the changes were necessary to keep CPO initiations from being banned by the Chief of Naval Operations.



**CNO-MCPON  
Worldwide  
CMC Conference**

**CPO 21**

*Building the CPO  
and the  
CPO Mess of the  
21<sup>st</sup> Century*

Dallas, Texas  
25-26 June 2001

**A NEW CENTURY**  
2000-2008

**9**

## MCPON Herdt - CPO 21 and A New Century

Jim Herdt relieved MCPON Hagan in 1998. MCPON Herdt continued the efforts of previous MCPONs to improve the quality of chief petty officers. MCPON Herdt issued the first CPO initiation guidance of the 21st century during the CNO/MCPON Spring Forum in the spring of 2000. The 2000 guidance contained similar information that was included in previous MCPON's guidance along with new information. There were specific duties assigned to Command Master Chiefs (CMCs) which included: briefing the selectees and spouses (separately) on the process, and briefing the wardroom. CMCs were not allowed to be a judge on initiation day. Herdt encouraged the consideration of replacing "CPO Initiation" with "CPO Transition" or "CPO Rites of Passage"

The 2000 Guidance also had the usual "Dos and Do-Nots" lists. The Do list included recommendations for organized physical training and the construction of guidon flags to be carried in formation. Book reports from the Navy Heritage Reading List along with voluntary civic activity were encouraged. Team-building assignments such as fundraising and talent shows were also recommended. Eggs were authorized as non-consumable props.

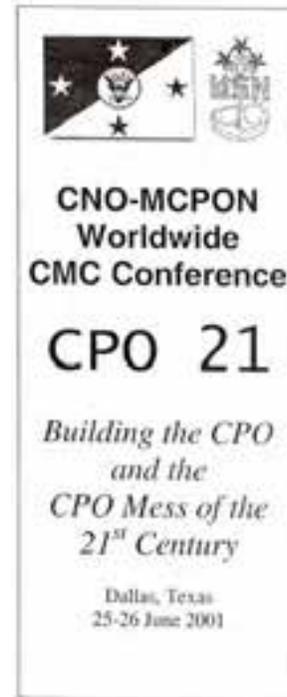
The Don'ts list included: no hazing, no inappropriate or sexually explicit jokes or skits--which included cross-dressing costumes. Verbal and physical abuse, alcohol consumption before or during initiation, and unsafe props were forbidden. Officers were not allowed to participate during the initiation. The only exception was that



Herdt Collection  
1998 MCPON Jim Herdt on the mess decks of USS Eishenhower

Commanding Officers, Executive Officers, and Flag Officers invited by the CMC were allowed to observe.

Videotaping of the initiation was not authorized as well as any activity not tied to the CPO Creed. The guidance also included a sample planning matrix for CPO messes that



began with a kickoff meeting in April and ended with a Khaki Ball in September after initiation was complete.<sup>52</sup>

A Command Master Chief Conference was held in Dallas, Texas on June 25-26, 2001 to introduce the concept of CPO 21. The theme of CPO 21 was "Building the CPO and the CPO Mess of the 21st Century". CPO 21 consisted of four core competencies that new chief petty officers were to be trained in. The four competencies included Leading Sailors, Developing Enlisted Sailors and Junior Officers, Communicating Core Values, and Supporting the Chain of Command.

Chief petty officers were described as "enlisted warriors who lead and manage the Sailor resources of the Navy they serve." CPO 21 reinforced the changes that had occurred in CPO initiations over the previous 20 years.

The CPO season was slowly evolving towards becoming a meaningful training period. Professional training, prior to initiation day, was becoming more the norm. However, some of the practices from previous years were still common. CPO selectees were still tasked to perform personal services for genuine chiefs such as shining shoes, fetching coffee and donuts, washing cars and picking up laundry in the period leading up to initiation day. During initiation day there were still abusive and humiliating

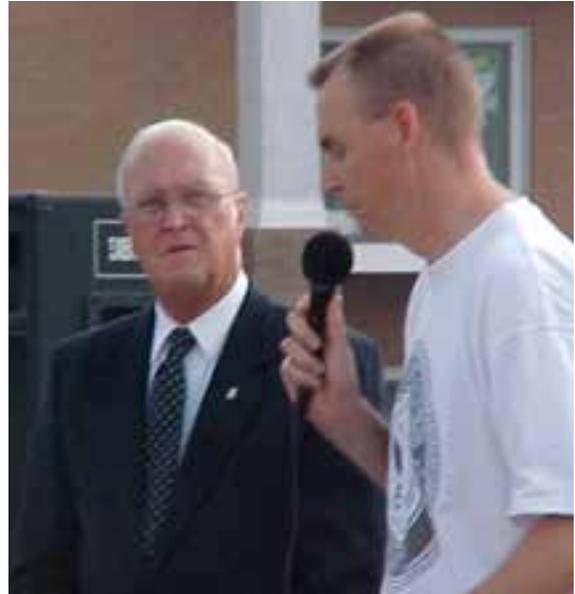
practices inflicted on CPO selectees under the guise of “tradition.” Many genuine CPOs still believed that selectees had to be broken down in order to learn humility. Others felt that selectees had to endure physical and verbal abuse, beyond what they would ever see in the fleet, in order to be able to cope with what they might encounter in the fleet. Many of the pranks and practices directed towards CPO selectees had little practical value and were mainly entertainment for the genuine chiefs.

Cajan Nelms was selected for Chief Construction Electrician in 2001 while stationed in Sigonella. She was notified by a friend that she had made chief. Nelms was the only Sailor selected for chief from her command. She was also one of four females selected from the other commands on the base. There were a total of about 40 CPO selectees from the base. She was assigned a sponsor, who she didn’t know and never interacted with. The Sigonella CPO selectees were given charge books. They spent the weeks leading up to initiation providing personal services to the genuine chiefs on the base which included shining their shoes and feeding them. They were required to carry “egg divisions” in order to demonstrate their ability to take care of their Sailors. There was no constructive or meaningful professional training. Most of the training amounted to being ridiculed by the genuine chiefs.

The CPO season was not a team-building experience. There were few team building events. Nelms spent many “training” evolutions literally sitting in a dog house with two other selectees. Nelms described her initiation as “not being pleasant.” Her initiation was not a bonding experience--that came later. In the years that followed, Nelms witnessed changes that occurred in the CPO Season which, in her view, transformed the season into a more meaningful, professional, team-building training event.<sup>53</sup>

During the early 2000s, the quality of the CPO season continued to improve by becoming more professional and less “fun and games.” CPO initiations were now alcohol and tobacco free. Charge books had become ornate keepsakes that were no longer desecrated or filled with vulgarities by fellow genuine chief petty officers. Inappropriate costumes, skits, and props were officially banned.

Khaki Balls began to become common. MCPON guidance authorized fund-raising as a team building activity but limited it to the khaki ball expenses for the CPO select and spouse only. This guidance was generally ignored and fund-raising became the main focus of the CPO season by the mid-to-late 2000s.



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2001 MCPON Bob Walker is introduced aboard USS *Wisconsin* in Norfolk VA during annual CPO Heritage Day event



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2001 Physical training became a major part of the CPO season in the new century. Physical training was supposed to be a team-building event and not a form of punishment or harrasement--which was often the case. Today genuine chief petty officers are encouraged to lead CPO selectees in physical training events instead of simply being observers.

## MCPON Scott - Battle Stations and the Final Test

Terry Scott relieved MCPON Herdt in April 2002. In his first guidance (2002) concerning CPO initiations Scott emphasized the positive changes that had taken place over the previous 10 years. He stated that the CPO season was now better at preparing “new chiefs with the knowledge, skills, abilities and tools that they will need to take on the responsibilities of a chief on that first day after their pinning.” He introduced the idea of Battle Stations as a final test “in the CPO select’s ability to perform as a chief.” The idea of Battle Stations was based on the capstone event used at Recruit Training Command at Great Lakes for a final test for recruits before graduation. Scott stressed that “All activities (related to CPO transition) must support our CPO Core Competencies and our Navy’s Core Values. <sup>54</sup>”

The following year, MCPON Scott continued using CPO 21 values as a means to “bring the newest chiefs into the mess.” His guidance banned the use of any food, including raw eggs, during initiation. Food or food products were forbidden to be used as “props or to denigrate or humiliate...new chiefs. <sup>55</sup>”

In 2004, distant learning training became mandatory for CPO selects. CPO selectees were required to complete 14 hours of Ninth House distant e-learning courses prior to September 16. The required courses included:

- Optimizing Performance (2.5 hours)
- Navigating Change (1.5 hours)
- Managing Change (1.5 hours)
- Resolving Interpersonal Issues (2.5 hours)

Scott also emphasized the need for the Chief’s Mess to develop Sailors year-round--not just during the CPO season. The 2004 season was extended by nine days by rescheduling selection board dates. <sup>56</sup>

It was now a common practice for CPO Messes to participate with other local CPO messes during the CPO season. In fleet concentration areas, such as Norfolk and San Diego, hundreds of CPO selects participated in events aboard the museum ships USS Wisconsin and USS Midway. Naval history and heritage education was now firmly ingrained as part of the CPO season. The USS Constitution in Boston became active in training CPO selectees.

The MCPON guidance in the early 2000s was very similar to the guidance issued over the previous 20 years. The difference was that it was now generally being adhered to by CPO Messes. Over the years the reference to CPO initiations had “gone by many names, initiation, journey to the mess, rites of passage, season of pride, etc. <sup>57</sup> There



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2005 MCPON Terry Scott introduced the idea of Battle Stations as the final test for CPO selectees.

was a lot of emphasis put on physical fitness training, community service, naval history and heritage, and a final pinning ceremony. The process had also become more family-oriented. Spouses of CPO selectees were briefed by command master chiefs about events of the CPO Season. They were given schedules of events and contact information. Family members were encouraged to be present at the final pinning ceremony.

Since the late 1990s, CPO Messes had provided feedback to the MCPON, via senior enlisted leadership, on lessons learned from the CPO season. The MCPON used the feedback as input for the annual guidance for the upcoming CPO season.

There were some unanticipated changes that occurred. Khaki balls began to become popular events in the weeks after the CPO season ended. The ball was designed to celebrate the new chief petty officers. However, in order to fund the event, it became a common practice for CPO selectees to raise funds during the CPO season. Fund raising had been authorized since the mid-1990s but only to cover the cost associated for a CPO selectee and their spouse to attend the ball. Fund raising events were usually cookouts and car washes. Some CPO messes began putting quotas on the amount a CPO selectee was required to raise. The money raised by selectees was used to fund most of the cost of CPO khaki balls. This included authorized items: CPO covers, collar devices, plaques and

other accouterments for the new chiefs. However, it often included unauthorized items such as door prizes and a subsidy for the cost of tickets to the event for all attendees. Any money remaining was to be donated to a worthy cause such as the CPO Scholarship Fund or Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society. Fund raising became a major focus and consumption of time detracting from more meaningful training.

The CPO season of the late 2000s was shortened due to scheduling and policy changes relating to Navy selection boards. Selection board results were no longer released within a few days after the board adjourned. The results of the board were required to be vetted through the Navy Personnel Command prior to being released. This often delayed the results for weeks which shortened the time for training prior to advancement. The selection boards for active and reserve Sailors convened on different dates. The active component list would generally be released several weeks before the reserve component list--or vice versa. This would disrupt or shorten the CPO season training time for both groups.

As the events of the CPO season became more focused on professional training and team building it became apparent that the few weeks of the CPO season were inadequate to train new chief petty officers. In 2005, MCPON Scott encouraged CPO messes to develop and implement a plan "for unit level CPO development and training". The idea was to expand training of chief petty officers beyond the few weeks of the CPO season.



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2006 CPO selectees at Naval Station Jacksonville, Fla. form up after receiving their charge books and CPO selectee name tags.



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2006 CPO selectees visiting the USS *Constitution* in Boston during the CPO season has become an annual event.



2002 CPO selectees board USS *Wisconsin* in Norfolk, Va. for the annual CPO Heritage Day event sponsored by the Hampton Roads Naval Museum.



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2003 CPO selectees NSA Millington Tenn. Final events for CPO selectees varied between CPO messes and associations. Some events went to extremes and lasted for 24-48 hours.



*Department of Defense photo*  
CPO selectee boat race at NAS Jacksonville, Fla. There is still a tradition of fun associated with the CPO season.



*Department of Defense photo*  
2008 Retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Robert Walker shared his wisdom about becoming a Navy chief as he spoke aboard the battleship USS Wisconsin (BB 64) during Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Heritage Day.

## MCPON Campa - Mission, Vision, and Guidance Principles

In 2006, Joe Campa relieved MCPON Scott. Campa's first guidance announced that "CPO Messes will abandon all practices, which have even the appearance of hazing or harassment. There is no place or tolerance for conduct, which humiliates or denigrates our fellow Sailors.<sup>59</sup>"

CPO initiation was now referred to as the "final event." The CPO season was now called the "training" or "transition" season. Command master chiefs, chiefs of the boat, command senior chiefs, and command senior enlisted leaders were responsible for the safe and dignified conduct of all aspects of the CPO season.

Final event participation was now generally restricted to U.S. Navy chief petty officers--active, reserve, and retired. Officers, even those who were former chiefs, were not authorized to participate. U.S. Coast Guard chief petty officers were only authorized to participate in the final event with the approval of a Fleet/Force/CNO-Directed CMC. E7-E9 personnel of other sister services had to receive the same type of approval to observe the final event.

A new Chief Petty Officer Leadership Course (CPOLC) was developed in 2006 to replace the old CPO Indoctrination course. The use of CPOLC became mandatory in 2007. Distance Learning Course requirements remained in effect for all FY-07 CPO selectees. The following courses were required to be completed before a selectee could be advanced:

- Situational Leadership II (Ninth House - 6 hours)
- Self-Management (Ninth House - 4 hours)
- Managing Change (Ninth House - 1.5 hours)
- The Mentoring Manager (Skillsoft MGMT0252 - 2.0 hours)
- Ethical Decision Making (Skillsoft PD0171 - 4.0 hours)

Campa stated that "The development of deck plate chiefs will not cease following Induction. We will continue to provide training, guidance, mentorship and leadership to all our chiefs throughout the year.<sup>60</sup>"

Fund-raising was beginning to become an issue by consuming much, if not most, of the limited training time during the few weeks of the training season. Fund-raising was recognized as a valuable team building exercise but it was to be limited to the direct costs of professional development of CPO selectees. Fund-raising was not an authorized means to raise funds for a CPO Mess. The fund-raising time was not to exceed actual training time.

Another issue that emerged during the mid-2000s was related to "CPO Academies." CPO Academies were developed at several shore installations to provide

additional training for CPO selectees. The training was generally more intense and sometimes potentially unsafe. It wasn't uncommon for CPO selectees ashore to attend continuous enhanced training for 24 to 48 hours as their final event. CPO Academies were not considered as a replacement for the training responsibilities of individual CPO Messes. MCPON Campa stressed that CPO Academies were not required or mandatory and that there was "no such thing as a finishing school for chiefs." CPO Academy type training plans and requests for overnight event(s) were required to be vetted through the applicable Force or Region Command Master Chiefs for approval.<sup>61</sup> Campa introduced CPO Mission, Vision, and Guidance Principles to the CPO Mess in his 2007 Guidance. The principles included:

- Deckplate Leadership
- Institutional and Technical Expertise
- Professionalism
- Character
- Loyalty
- Active Communication
- Sense of Heritage

All events associated with the CPO Induction Season, as it was now called, were to conform to the guiding principles. During the final event the use of props, from the past, were forbidden. MCPON Campa stated in his 2007 guidance

***"There will be no Kangaroo Courts."***



Depart of Defense photo  
2007 MCPON Campa signing a CPO charge book. Campa proposed that CPO selectees and the development of "deck plate" chiefs should be a year-round process.

# CPO MISSION VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## Chief Petty Officer

Leadership - Tradition - Heritage



### Mission

Provide leadership to the Enlisted Force and advice to Navy leadership to create combat-ready Naval Forces.

### Vision

A senior enlisted force that serves first and foremost as Deckplate Leaders committed to developing Sailors and enforcing standards; remains responsive, aligned and well-connected to both Leadership and Sailors; and conducts itself in a consistently professional, ethical and traditional manner.

### Guiding Principles

**Deckplate Leadership** – Chiefs are visible leaders who set the tone. We will know the mission, know our Sailors, and develop them beyond their expectations as a team and as individuals.

**Institutional and Technical Expertise** – Chiefs are the experts in their field. We will use experience and technical knowledge to produce a well trained enlisted and officer team.

**Professionalism** – Chiefs will actively teach, uphold, and enforce standards. We will measure ourselves by the success of our Sailors. We will remain invested in the Navy through self-motivated military and academic education and training and will provide proactive solutions that are well founded, thoroughly considered, and linked to mission accomplishment.

**Character** – Chiefs abide by an uncompromising code of integrity, take full responsibility for their actions and keep their word. This will set a positive tone for the command, unify the Mess, and create esprit de corps.

**Loyalty** – Chiefs remember that loyalty must be demonstrated to seniors, peers and subordinates alike, and that it must never be blind. Few things are more important than people who have the moral courage to question the appropriate direction in which an organization is headed and then the strength to support whatever final decisions are made.

**Active Communication** – Chiefs encourage open and frank dialog, listen to Sailors and energize the communication flow up and down the chain of command. This will increase unit efficiency, mission readiness, and mutual respect.

**Sense of Heritage** – Defines our past and guides our future. Chiefs will use heritage to connect Sailors to their past, teach values and enhance pride in service to our country.

*ITCM Leuci Graphic*

2007 CPO Mission Vision and Guiding Principles (MVGP) were introduced by MCPON Joe Campa. CPO messes were required to ensure that all events related to the CPO season conformed to MVGP standard.



Department of Defense photo  
2007 MCPON Campa speaking with CPO selectees at the Navy Exchange Uniform Store.



Department of Defense photo  
2008 MCPON Campa speaking at the Reserve Sailor of the Year pinning ceremony.



Department of Defense photo  
2008 Physical training became the norm for the CPO Induction season by the mid-2000s.



## **CPO 365**

2009-

# 10



Depart of Defense photo

2011 MCPON Rick West running with CPO selectees

## MCPON West - CPO 365 Begins

Rick West relieved MCPON Campa in December 2008. MCPON West's 2009 guidance was short--only eight pages. West left it up to CMCs to have the flexibility to run their induction as they saw fit. The "Dos and Do-Nots" list only included nine items. It was intentional. West emphasized that induction must be safe and every event must support CPO Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles.

West did make one change with regard to physical training by authorizing and recommending the "use of unit-specific t-shirts and PT gear." Previously, MCPON guidance had encouraged genuine CPOs and CPO selects wear the same PT gear--the Navy PTU during the induction season. The requirement to wear the Navy PTU during official command directed PRT and the official PRT for selectees prior to frocking remained in effect.

In 2010 West issued his second guidance on CPO induction. He reiterated that "fund-raising should be limited to the direct costs for the professional development of the selectees, and not as a means to raise funds for the Mess.

Fund-raising time will not exceed training time."

For the first time, in any MCPON guidance, West stated that Reserve Component CPO selectees were to be incorporated into their Active Duty supported command's induction season. He encouraged active component commands to bring reserve component CPO selects on board as part of the team and continue their training throughout the year like any other Navy chief petty officer.

West standardized the use of the Navy's service song "Anchors Aweigh." CPOs were directed to stand at attention during an official occasion or event, whether in uniform or in civilian attire, when the song was played. During a non-official occasion CPOs should, if appropriate, join in with the singing of the song.

The 2010 guidance contained a list of required training topics which included,

- DUI Prevention
- Domestic Violence Prevention
- Suicide awareness and Prevention

- Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)
- Sexual Harassment
- Expected CPO standards and conduct
- Ethics
- Brilliant on Basics
- Fraternalization Prevention

West also directed that each non-select was to be appropriately notified and given a Career Development Board (CBD) as soon as possible.

In 2011, MCPON West introduced the concept of CPO 365. CPO 365 was a three-phase, year-round, training evolution designed to prepare first class petty officers (FCPOs) for advancement to chief petty officer.

Phase I was to begin the day after the CPO pinning ceremony and was to be used as the foundation for year-round training of FCPOs. Phase I included training of the FCPO Mess by the command master chief along with community service events with the CPO/FCPO Messes. Other combined team building events and physical training would include the wardroom.

Phase II would begin after the CPO selection board eligible list was released to provide additional training for “board eligible” personnel. Career Development Boards would be conducted on non-board eligible FCPOs concentrating on what they needed to work on to continue developing. The training that began in phase I would continue during phase II.

Phase III would begin when the CPO selection board results were released. Phase III was nearly identical to what had previously been called the CPO Season. Phase III would end with the CPO pinning ceremony after the final event. It was also emphasized that Career Development Boards were extremely important, and required, for both non-selects and CPO selects once the selection board results were released.

The 2011 guidance did not contain specific “Do or Don’t” lists for the first time. However, there were new, more specific, comments regarding excessive fund-raising. command master chiefs were directed to work with the Mess Treasurer to fully account for all fundraising and expenditures related to Induction Season.

MCPON Guidance in 2012 was titled MCPON’s 2011-2012 CPO 365/Induction Guidance (ANCHOR UP!). The guidance reviewed the first year of CPO 365 noted the positive and less-positive results. Based on feedback from the fleet, CPOs and CPO selectees were better prepared and better trained for Induction Season. The 2012 guidance was very similar to the previous year’s guidance. However, in 2012, the “Dos and Do-Nots” list



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2009 Fund-raising became a team-building but time consuming event associated with CPO inductions in the mid-2000s

was once again included due to some “misinterpretations” in the previous year. The list contained much of the same information that had been addressed over the previous 15 years.

MCPON West reiterated that CPO 365 was “serious business designed to build new chief petty officers through controlled constructive mental and physical stress. It should not be dismissed as ‘reindeer games’, a ‘kangaroo court’, or any silly nickname that undermines the true intent- nor should every training event be a pre-meditated confrontation staged mainly to frustrate or provoke selectees.”

A meet-and-greet with selectees and families event, which had actually been occurring for several years, was reemphasized as an important critical step at the beginning of Phase III. CPO Messes were also encouraged to take every opportunity to emphasize U.S. Naval history, heritage and traditions.

The new CPO 365 Development Guide, which was to be distributed to command master chiefs in early 2012, was to be used as a resource for compiling Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS) for CPO selectees.



*Depart of Defense photo*

2011 CPO pinning ceremonies also include the “donning of the hat” which can be traced back to the earliest CPO promotions.



*Depart of Defense photo*

2009 CPO selects running with “port and starboard” socks. Physical training is now a fixture of the CPO season.



*Depart of Defense photo*

2011 A new Chief wears “the hat” for the first time.

Josh Treadwell found out he was selected for Chief Mass Communication Specialist in 2010 while at Navy Mobilization Processing Site (NMPS) Norfolk. He was being processed as an Individual Augmentee (IA) destined for Kabul, Afghanistan. Two days after being notified of his selection he flew out to Ft Dix, N.J. for 45 days of basic combat skills training before deploying.

At Fort Dix he was put into a training group consisting mainly of hospital corpsmen. There were two other selectees. For the first two weeks there was no interaction with the CPO mess which was still getting organized.

Eventually, the three selectees were assigned sponsors and went to a “meet and greet” with the Fort Dix CPO mess. The meet and greet was supposed to be alcohol free per MCPON guidance. However, several genuine CPOs ignored the non-alcohol rule and it was reported which resulted in a “all stop” of CPO induction events for retraining of the CPO mess.

When the stand down ended, the selectees were heavily involved in IA training. In the evenings they shifted to “CPO training” which consisted mainly of entertainment of the genuine chief petty officers. They were given charge books which were standard green Navy record books. They were required to present their books to all CPOs for comments and signatures. Most of the written comments were positive. However there were a few “old school” obscene comment entered in their books.

Eventually Treadwell and his group of corpsmen flew to Kuwait. They were there for about a week. The three selectees went to a meet and greet and “trained” with the local CPO selectees. The training mainly consisted of “taskers” made by chief petty officers to perform personal services. After a week, Treadwell flew out to Kabul, via Kandahar. He expected to be at Kandahar for only a day before proceeding on to Kabul. However, he was held “hostage” by the CPO mess and informed he would complete the last two weeks of training at Kandahar before reporting to Kabul.

For the next two weeks, Treadwell and the eleven other CPO selectees trained. He was required to reformat his charge book to conform to the standards of the Kandahar CPO mess. The training consisted mainly of singing and performing skits for the CPO mess. The CPO mess consisted mainly of SEAL, EOD, and Seabee chief petty officers--so there was a lot of physical training “til you drop.”

While in Kandahar there were daily rocket attacks that disrupted the training schedule. For the final day, they trained, for 24 hours, on an obstacle course built by the Seabees. The final event occurred in a large tent filled with “hundreds of old school” CPOs where they faced a board of master chiefs.

They were pinned after the final event in an all hands area which was open to all personnel to witness. Later that day, Chief Treadwell flew out to Kabul and reported aboard as a chief petty officer.



Department of Defense photo  
2010 MCC Josh Treadwell is pinned in Kandahar, Afghanistan.



Department of Defense photo

Jeff Standley was selected for Chief Aviation Ordnanceman in the summer of 2011. He found out he was selected by logging into Facebook. Standley was one of two Sailors selected for chief from his command at NAS Oceana, Va. They joined with other CPO selects from other commands at Oceana. They participated in professional training, physical training, as well as fund-raising events. The fund-raising events consisted of selling donuts, washing cars, selling food, and shining shoes. There was no quota put on him and his fellow selectee but between the two they raised over \$4,000.

Standley stated that CPO 365 was a positive, never-will-forget, evolution. He and all the selectees in his group formed bonds and learned to work as a team. When asked if he felt short-changed because he may have missed out on some of the “traditions” of the past--the answer was no. He felt that the CPO 365 experience was awesome and truly helped to prepare him for the responsibilities he assumed as a chief. It formed a bond between him and all other chief petty officers regardless of whether they went through Initiation, Induction, or CPO 365. Standley was commissioned on September 1, 2013 as a Chief Warrant Officer (CWO2).<sup>62</sup>



*Department of Defense photo*

2009 CPO selectee places his white hat in a coffin for burial. Burying the white hat symbolizes movement up in rate from first class petty officer to chief petty officer.





*Depart of Defense photo*  
2010 CPO selectee participates in the final event in Kandahar, Afghanistan.



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2014 CPO pinning ceremony Afghanistan.

## CPO INDUCTIONS IN THE DESERT

CPO 365 training and pinning ceremonies are conducted in times of peace and war. War has sometimes delayed or disrupted a training event or pinning ceremony but has never ended them.



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2014 Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 25 pinning ceremony in Afghanistan



*Depart of Defense photo*

2010 CPO charge books USS *Iwo Jima* LHD-7. A dozen new chief petty officers show the collective effort of their teamwork to form a work of art.

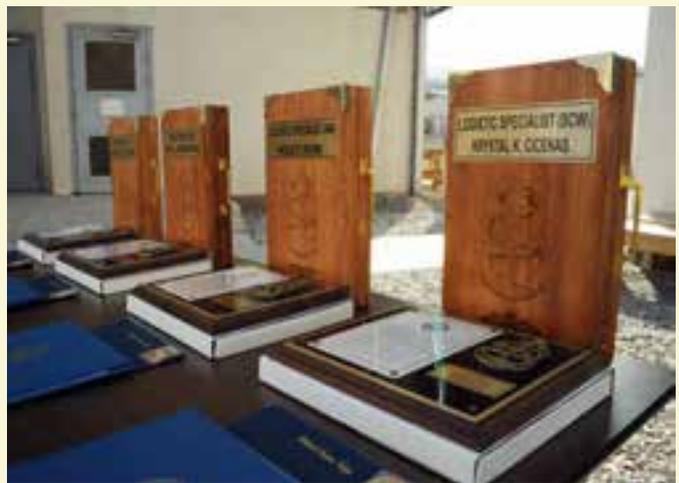
## CPO CHARGE BOOKS TODAY

The CPO charge book has evolved from being an object that was often discarded or put away after initiation due to crude and obscene comments on the pages. Today, the CPO charge book is an ornate and treasured keepsake that is proudly put on display for all to see. Wooden boxes, known as vessels, are works of art used to store the charge book.



*Depart of Defense photo*

2011 Charge book vessels, plaques, and covers on display aboard USS *Boxer* LHD-4.



*Depart of Defense photo*

2014 Charge book vessels on display at the NMCB 25 CPO pinning ceremony.



*Depart of Defense photo*  
2014 CPO selectees marching in Boston while spending a week training aboard USS *Constitution*.

### **MCPON Stevens CPO 365 Today**

Mike Stevens relieved MCPON West on September 26, 2012 shortly after the 2nd year of CPO 365 began. In his first guidance he made a change that made the headlines. Stevens officially changed the name of the process from “Induction” to “CPO 365.” He stated that the term

*“Induction is hereby officially and respectfully sundowned.”*

In the following days online bloggers and Navy news magazines, such as the Navy Times, ran sensational headlines stating the “MCPON orders end to chief Induction.”<sup>63</sup> Many Sailors, including retired chief petty officers, interpreted the headlines to mean the MCPON had ended CPO Induction/Initiations. The Navy Times article did explain that the word “Induction” had simply been replaced by “CPO 365”. However, many people did not read beyond the headline. Over the next few months numerous online bloggers perpetuated the false claim that CPO Inductions were a thing of the past. Many lamented and complained that Navy chief petty officer traditions were being discarded by the MCPON’s guidance.

The changes made to CPO 365 in 2013 were actually minor and were a continuation of the evolution of CPO Initiations that had been ongoing since MCPON Black issued the first guidance in 1967.

CPO 365 was reduced from three phases to two phases. Phase 1 would start the day after the CPO pinning ceremony in September and would conclude on the day the CPO selection board results were released. All FCPOs were required to participate in Phase 1 whether selection board eligible or not. Phase 2 would begin when Phase 1 ended and would conclude with the CPO pinning ceremony in September.

All FCPOs would remain engaged during Phase 2, although there would be separate training and events for those FCPOs that were CPO selects. Events and training for CPO selects included the CPO Selectee Leadership Course and fundraising events. MCPON Stevens stated that the training that took place during Phase 1 would continue in Phase 2 and CPOs would “not abruptly start using a different tone or harsh style of training.”

MCPON Stevens reiterated that chief petty officers would *“respect and treat those that have been selected to become chief petty officers in the same way that we treat each other and that is not open to interpretation.”*<sup>64</sup>

New CPO 365 rules restricted fundraising by selectees to only “cover direct cost of their professional development and unit cohesion.” Authorized costs included charge books/vessels, t-shirts, and recognition packages. Funds could not be used purchase Khaki Ball tickets, provide seed money for the next years’ CPO 365 or be contributed to CPO Messes. Command master chiefs were required to approve, monitor, and account for all selectee fundraising and expenditures. Another change to CPO 365 in 2013 had to do with the Navy Physical Training Uniform (PTU). Since 2008, CPO Pride t-shirts had been authorized for wear by chief petty officers and CPO selects during physical training events. The 2013 change directed that the PTU would be worn by all participants, including genuine chiefs, during PT sessions. This restriction did not sit well with chiefs who felt there should be a visible distinction between genuine CPOs and CPO selects. However, there were other chiefs who viewed the idea of everyone in the same PT uniform as unifying one-team building experience.

The capstone event, now known as the “Final Test”, was limited to eighteen hours--0600 through midnight on the day before the pinning ceremony. The eighteen hour limit was implemented to end the practice in some CPO Messes of having final events which lasted twenty-four to forty-eight hours. It also was intended to make the ceremony more memorable by ensuring the new chief petty officers were alert and rested. This change was viewed by some chiefs as a break in tradition by making the final event easier and less stressful. While others, who barely remembered their own pinning ceremonies because they were exhausted or drunk, viewed the change as a positive step and not a break in tradition.

Beginning in 2013 other U.S. armed forces and foreign nation service members’ were not authorized to participate in the Final Test since CPO 365 had become a year-long evolution.

The following year, MCPON’s 2013-2014 CPO 365 Guidance revised some policy introduced during the previous year<sup>65</sup>. CPO Pride T-shirts were once again authorized for wear during CPO 365 physical training. However, Navy PTU shorts were the only shorts authorized to be worn with the CPO Pride T-shirts.

Other U.S. military and foreign nation service members were authorized to participate in the final test provided they participated in the in the entire Phase 1&2 periods.



Depart of Defense photo  
2013 MCPON Stevens speaking at CPO 365 event.



Depart of Defense photo  
2013 MCPON Michael D. Stevens discusses the CPO 365 training program with chief petty officers and first class petty officers from Naval Air Station Jacksonville after a physical training session. CPO 365 is a year-long program designed to prepare the minds and bodies the Navy’s next-generation of senior enlisted leadership.

# CPO 365



.Department of Defense photos

## Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Chief petty officer initiations have evolved over the last 70 years from a simple celebration of promotion to year-round professional training of first class petty officers. The process has changed over the years but the goal has remained the same--to prepare a first class petty officer for the new role as a chief. Chief initiations, inductions, and CPO 365 have all achieved the same result--creating a common bond among all chief petty officers of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

CPO initiations of the past should not be judged with the "eyes" of today. Similarly, the "eyes" of the past should not judge CPO 365 of today. Many of the CPO traditions and stereotypes of the past have been shelved and replaced with "new" traditions--which will also give way to "newer" traditions in the future. Traditions, unlike values, can change or be replaced. However, the core values of chief petty officers as leaders of Sailors and the backbone of the Navy has and will remain constant. The Navy is still run by chief petty officers.

The 2013-2014 CPO 365 MCPON Guidance contained the usual "Dos and Do-Nots" list. There were a few incidents, as usual, that were in conflict the guidance. The "Dos and Do-Nots" list, also as usual, contained many of the same items that have appeared on the list since 1968--*maybe that list is a tradition that will eventually be shelved.*



Department of Defense photos

## Endnotes:

1. Circular 1 dated 3 March 1893 established the classification of chief petty officer to take effect on 1 April 1893.
2. The 1893 and 1894 annual reports of the Secretary of the Navy to both houses of congress make no mention of the establishment of the classification of chief petty officer in the United States Navy.
3. Circular #41 dated 8 January 1885 divided petty officers into three classes--first, second, and third. Petty officers were also divided into three classes designated as Seaman Class, Special Class, and Artificer Class. First class petty officers of the Seaman Class were designated as Chief Boatswain's Mate, Chief Quartermaster, and Chief Gunner's Mate. However, those same titles had also been used prior to 1885.
4. U.S. Navy Regulations 1893, Article 906, stipulated that chief, first, and second class petty officers would mess separately from the rest of the crew.
5. General Order 68, dated 26 November 1901, modified Navy Regulations 1900 to take effect 1 January 1902. Article 525, paragraph 1, was changed to authorize a separate mess for chief petty officers. Paragraph 2 stated that other petty officers, enlisted men, and marines would be arranged in one general mess.
6. Our Navy Vol. 8 May 1914 page 47 article on the first CPO club ashore at NTS Newport RI in 1906.
7. General Order 134, dated 26 June 1903, authorized monthly pay of \$70 for all chief petty officers with a permanent appointment dated on or after 1 July 1903.
8. Bureau of Navigation Bulletin Number 118 dated 23 November 1929 described changes to U.S. Navy Travel Instructions stating that "Chief petty officers are entitled to standard Pullman lower berths when sleeping accommodations are required and to parlor cars otherwise."
9. Circular Letter 64-29, dated 19 September 1929, authorized working dress for Chief Aviation Pilots to be the same as Naval Aviators. Cotton khaki uniforms were for summer wear and green wool uniforms for winter wear.
10. Change 6 to 1922 Navy Uniform Regulations, dated 1 May 1929, required that all chief petty officers "wear on blue clothing, a rating badge with eagle and specialty mark embroidered in silver..." bullion thread no later than 1 July 1930.
11. BuNav Circular Letter 64-29, dated 19 September 1929, authorized khaki working uniforms for Chief Aviation Pilots. Circular Letter 35-39, dated 10 October 1939, authorized khaki working uniforms for chief petty officers serving in submarines or detailed to duty involving employment in submarines for submarine service. BuNav Circular Letter 17-14, dated 11 February 1941, authorized khaki working uniforms for chief petty officers serving in submarines, submarine chasers, eagle boats, motor torpedo boats, and motor torpedo boat chasers or detailed to duty involving employment, for service in, and with those vessels. ALNAV 16, dated 21 February 1941, authorized khaki working uniforms for all chief petty officers, and officers, serving on all ships and shore stations.
12. "Battleship Sailor" pages 142-143. Author Theodore Mason refers to Chief Boatswain's Mate John E. ("Spud") who was the coach of the ship's boxing team and the number one enlisted man on USS California who "lived in lordly splendor in his own stateroom, near the bow of the main deck."
13. All Hands Magazine January 1944 page 68.
14. Albert Dempster, YNC(SS) Retired interview 19 September 2013 Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington DC
15. BuPers Circular Letter 244-45, dated 17 August 1945, authorized CPOs, chief cooks, chief stewards, cooks, and stewards to wear an officer-style dress blue uniform with the same buttons (35 line) worn by officers.
16. Navy Uniform Regulations 1947, change #1, approved 5 June 1947 modified article 9-40 to add a cap device mount to the CPO cap.
17. Life Magazine 28 September 1953
18. BuPers Notice 1020 dated 28 October 1958 announced changes to 1951 Navy Uniform Regulations which included the change in color of female CPO dress blue coats to the dark navy blue (black) worn by women officers.
19. Welland Shoop, CWO4, (Ret.) interview 26 March 2013 Hampton Roads Naval Museum
20. Robert Cooper, ACC, (Ret.) interview 15 May 2013 Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington, DC
21. Roy Cooper, ETC, Retired interview 19 June 2013 Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington, DC
22. "Three Stars and a Crow" by Robert J. Walker
23. All Hands magazine June 1958 page 42. E8/E9 ratings established by Public Law 85-422 authorized one percent of the navy's total enlisted strength to be pay grade E9 and two percent to be pay grade E8.
24. All Hands January 1961 page 54 announced that collar devices for E8 and E9 authorized.
25. BuPers Notice 1020, dated 14 January 1969, announced new cap devices for SCPO and MCPO authorized 1969. All Hands magazine November 1969 page 62.
26. Richard Johnson, FORCM(Ret.) interview 19 February 2013.
27. Paul Bohn, CMDCM(Ret.) interview 26 March 2013 Hampton Roads Naval Museum.
28. Helen Sadowski, YNC(Ret.) interview 06 June 2013 Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington, DC.
29. Quote from MCPON Black published in All Hands Magazine January 1968.
30. Joseph Lalley, FORCM (Ret.) interview 26 August 2013.
31. William Plackett, MCPON(Ret.) interview 18 February 2013
32. All Hands magazine October 1970 page 30 announced he establishment of the CNO Advisory Board. The board consisted of seven senior and master chiefs selected from the fleet. All Hands January 1971 page 42.

33. MCPOC program established BuPers Instruction 5400.58 1971 Z-Gram 95 All Hands Magazine August 1972 page 42.
34. Jim Herdt, MCPON (Ret.) interview 8 August 2013 Navy Memorial Washington DC.
35. Ken Faller, ENCM, SS, (Ret.) interview 19 June 2013 Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington, DC.
36. All Hands Magazine May 1973 page 55. NAVOP 63/72
37. All Hands Magazine June 1973 page 42.
38. All Hands Magazine November 1973 page 37.
39. Gerald Saucier BTCS (Ret.) interview 20130619 Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington, DC.
40. All Hands Magazine September 1973 page 42.
41. All Hands Magazine November 1973 page 38.
42. Duane Bushey, MCPON (Ret.) interview 13 March 2013 Naval Station Norfolk VA.
43. Robert J. Walker, MCPON (Ret.) interview June 2000.
44. Len Joslyn, RMC (SW) Retired interview 15 February 2013.
45. Elizabeth E. (Krickit) Shoemaker, ENCS (Ret.) interview 29 August 2013.
46. Thomas Dandes, BTCS (Ret.) interview 30 August 2013.
47. Duane Bushey, MCPON (Ret.) interview 13 March 2013 Naval Station Norfolk VA.
48. John Hagan, MCPON (Ret.) interview 6 August 2013 Washington DC.
49. Mike House, RMCM (SW), Ret. Interview 15 February 2013.
50. MCPON Bushey's letter to Command Master Chiefs, Command Senior Chiefs, Command Chiefs and Navy Chief Petty Officers dated 11 June 1991. The subject of the letter was Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Initiation/Indoctrination Cycle.
51. John Hagan, MCPON (Ret.) interview 2000.
52. 2000 CPO Initiation Guidelines Point Paper CNO/MCPON Spring Forum 2000.
53. CECS Cajan Nelms interview 20130522.
54. 2002 MCPON Guidance.
55. 2003 MCPON Guidance.
56. 2004 MCPON Guidance.
57. 2004 MCPON Guidance.
58. 2005 MCPON Guidance.
59. 2006 MCPON Guidance.
60. 2007 MCPON Guidance.
61. 2007 MCPON Guidance.
62. AOC Jeffrey Standley interview 20130522.
63. Navy Times Magazine 7 January 2013.

64. MCPON 2012-2013 CPO 365 Guidance.
65. MCPON 2013-2014 CPO 365 Guidance.



Master Chief Jim Leuci has served in the Navy for over forty years--first enlisting on 16 May 1974. He initially served eight years on active duty aboard USS *Guam* LPH-9, Naval Telecommunications Systems Integration Center (NTSIC) Cheltenham, Md., and USS *Texas* CGN-39. In 1982, he transferred to the Naval Reserve. He was selected for Chief Radioman in 1988. He was recalled to active duty in 1994 to deploy to Haiti during the U.S. intervention. In 2000, he was selected to be Command Master Chief of Commander Naval Coastal Warfare Group Two (COMNCWGRU TWO). In 2001, he was recalled to active duty and served as the COMNCWGRU TWO CMDCM (9580) for three years. Since 2005, he has been assigned to NAVHISTVTU0615R--a reserve unit that supports the Naval History and Heritage Command.

Master Chief Leuci is a 2002 graduate of the Senior Enlisted Academy Non-Resident Course Class 01. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree (2001) in Computer Engineering from Christopher Newport University, Newport News Va. Leuci worked for NASA at Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va., for thirty years, before retiring as a computer engineer. He returned to active duty with the Navy in January 2014 to serve as the historian for the Navy Reserve Centennial Commemoration. He is stationed at the Hampton Roads Naval Museum Annex located on Naval Station Norfolk, Va.

Over the years, he has written several articles on naval history that have appeared in All Hands Magazine, The Naval Reservist Magazine (TNR), and the Chief Petty Officer 365 Development Guide. He was also the lead contributor for "Ready Then Ready Now Ready Always" a book on the history of the Navy Reserve as well as another book from the Navy Memorial titled "History of the Chief Legacy of Excellence."



